

Ṣūfism, or Islamic mysticism, containing elements derived not only from Islam, but from Christian, Neo-Platonic and Jewish sources, is both philosophical and mystical, but it is primarily a way of life. It means seeking, and finding, the Path to God, and, having found it, following it to the end. The Ṣūfis held that God is the Only Real Existence, and also Absolute Good and Beauty. The human soul came from Him, but has fallen away and can only return to Him by the Way of Love, which will lead it back to reunion with Him.

This Anthology includes contributions from writers covering a period of twelve centuries, and these contributions are given in chronological order.

B.P.
189
S59

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

AN ANTHOLOGY OF SŪFISM

Compiled by

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III



LUZAC & COMPANY, LTD.

46 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

1954

*Printed in Great Britain
at the BURLEIGH PRESS, Lewins Mead, BRISTOL*

E R R A T A

Page vii, line 3 for al-Daranī read al-Dārānī and for No. (151)
read No. (157).

Page vii, line 7 for 'Isa read 'Īsa.

Page viii, line 8 from foot, for Sa'dī read Sa'd-i- and for No. 107),
read No. (105).

Page viii, line 2 for Awḥādī read Awḥādī.

Page viii, line 17 for Ni'matu'llah read Ni'matu'llāh.

Page 9, line 1 for L. Goldziher read I. Goldziher.

Page 24, line 9 from foot, for ABU read ABŪ.

Page 28, line 19 for Stevenson read Stephenson.

Page 38, line 15 for clear in read clear is.

Page 42, line 2 from foot, for shall read shalt.

Page 45, line 8 for Became read became.

Page 62, line 14 from foot, for attributes read attributes.

Page 70, line 5, for chance read chances.

Page 87, line 15 from foot, for Mas'ud-I-Sa'd-I-Salmān read
Mas'ūd-i-Sa'd-i-Salmān.

Page 96, lines 8 and 9 delete Sa'dī and (118).

Page 100, line 2 from foot, for you read your.

Page 106, line 8 for Sa'id read Sa'īd.

Page 124, line 9 for E. M. R. Jones read E. R. Jones.

Page 126, line 6 from foot, for Palacies read Palacios.

Page 142, line 2 for 191 read (191).

Page 143, line 14 from foot, for al-Shāthilī read al-Shādhilī.

Belgrave



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INTRODUCTION

Ṣūfism, containing elements derived not only from Islam, but from Hellenistic sources and also from Christianity, is the search for a direct knowledge of God, "the Creative Truth", and it is primarily a way of life, which means seeking, and finding, the Path to God, and, having found it, following it to the end.

It is both philosophical and mystical. God is regarded by the Ṣūfis as Pure Being, the Only Real Existence, and therefore as including all other existence. He is also Absolute Good and Absolute Beauty, of which all earthly beauty is only a reflection. Beauty desires to be manifested and so the material, visible world came into being.

Man—the human soul—is kept apart from God by the illusion of self and only by Love can self be overcome and the mystic attain to a knowledge of God and to Union with Him and so become one with Real Being, the True Beloved.

Such is the Ṣūfi philosophy, but the way to God is marked by stages, first the renunciation of all else but God, then the following of the guidance of God's Light and Grace in the heart, and then the attainment, through Love, of a life lived in—and through—God.

So this Anthology of Ṣūfism begins with an account of the nature and purpose of Ṣūfism by writers, early and late. It then tells of the Ṣūfi idea of the Nature of the Godhead: it deals with the different stages of the way to Him, and finally with the end to which the Path of Love leads, reunion with God Himself, the Creative Truth.

Contributions are given in chronological order.

Several well-known contributions to Ṣūfi literature have been omitted from this Anthology, as they have already appeared in my *Readings from the Mystics of Islam*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful thanks are due to those authors, publishers and other copyright-owners who have given me permission to use copyright material.

Messrs. George Allen and Unwin for passages from A. J. Arberry's *Sufism*; Messrs. W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. for passages from T. R. Hughes' *Notes on Muhammedanism*; the Asiatic Society for passages from J. Stephenson's translation of (Sanā'i's) *Hadīqatu'l-Haqīqat*; Messrs. Ernest Benn Ltd. for a passage from R. A. Nicholson's *Persian Lyrics*; the Cambridge University Press for passages from E. G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, Vols. II, III and IV, and the same writer's *A Year Among the Persians*, from *A Volume of Studies presented to E. G. Browne*, from R. A. Nicholson's *Eastern Poetry and Prose*, from the same author's *Studies in Islamic Poetry*, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, *Dīwāni Shamsi Tabrīz*, and *The Idea of Personality in Sūfism*, and from A. J. Arberry's *The Doctrine of the Sūfis*; Messrs. Chapman & Hall for passages from Simon Ockley's translation of *Hayy ibn Yaqzān*; the Islamic Research Association for passages from A. J. Arberry's *The Song of Lovers*; Herr W. Kohlhammer and Dr. O. Spies for passages from *Three Treatises on Mysticism*; the Lutterworth Press and Dr. J. W. Sweetman for passages from *Islam and Christian Theology*, J. W. Sweetman: Part I, Vol. I (1945), pp. 120, 124, 130ff., 148 (Lutterworth Press); Messrs. Luzac & Co. for passages from E. J. W. Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vols. I, III and IV, from E. R. Jones' translation of T. J. de Boer's *History of Philosophy in Islam*, from Lucas White King's translation of the *Tayyibāt* of Sa'dī, from A. J. Arberry's *The Immortal Rose*, and from M. Iqbal's *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Mr. John Murray for passages from C. Field's translation of *Alchemy of*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Happiness (al-Ghazālī), and *The Confessions of al-Ghazzali*, from Sir J. Singh's *Invocations of Ansāri*, from A. J. Arberry's *Avicenna on Theology*, and from H. Sunderland's translation of Asin Palacios' *Islam and the Divine Comedy*; The Oxford University Press for a passage from *The Legacy of Persia* (ed. A. J. Arberry); the Princeton University Press (U.S.A.) and Dr. E. J. Jurji for passages from his *Illumination in Islamic Mysticism*; Mr. Arthur Probstein for passages from G. H. Darab's translation of *Makhzanol Asrār* (Nīzāmī), and C. E. Wilson's translation of the *Haft Paikar* (Nīzāmī); Dr. A. J. Arberry and the Royal India Society for passages from *The Tulip of Sinai*; the Royal Asiatic Society for passages from E. H. Whinfield's translation of *Lawā'ih* (Jāmī), from W. H. T. Gairdner's translation of *Mishkāt al-Anwār* (al-Ghazālī), from R. A. Nicholson's *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (al-Hujwīrī), from J. Robson's *Tracts on Listening to Music* and from the Society's Journal for 1901, 1904, 1906; Messrs. Routledge & Kegan Paul for passages from S. G. Champion's *The Eleven Religions*, from E. H. Whinfield's translation of *The Quatrains* ('Umar Khayyām), the *Masnavi* (Rūmī), and *Gulshan i Rāz* (Shabistarī), from R. H. Griffith's translation of *Yūsuf u Zulaikha* (Jāmī) and from E. H. Rodwell's 'Omar Khayyam'; Messrs. Emery Walker and Dr. A. J. Arberry for passages from the latter's translation of *The Rubā'iyāt* (Rūmī) and the *Poem of the Way* (Ibn al-Fārid); Mr. John M. Watkins for passages from the anonymous *Selections from Rubaiyāt and Odes of Hāfiż*. I am also indebted to M. M. Shuaib's translation of *The Qasīdah* (Khaqānī) (Mufid-i-Am Press, Lahore).

My grateful acknowledgements are also due to the following owners of copyright.

Professor A. J. Arberry for passages from the *History of Sūfism* (Longmans Green & Co.) and other works for which acknowledgment is made under their publishers; Mr. Patrick Browne and Mr. Michael Browne for a passage from the late Dr. E. G. Browne's article on *Sūfism* (Religious Systems of the World) and many other passages from his work, otherwise acknowledged; Dr. Edwin E.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Calverley for a passage from his *Worship in Islam* ; Mrs. Fairs for passages from the late Dr. D. S. Margoliouth's *Early Development of Mohammedanism* ; Mrs. Merrett for passages from the late Miss M. J. Garnett's *Mysticism and Magic in Turkey* ; Mrs. Nicholson and Mr. Javid Iqbal for passages from the late Dr. R. A. Nicholson's translation of M. Iqbal's *Secrets of the Self* ; Mrs. Nicholson also for passages from the late Dr. R. A. Nicholson's *A Persian Forerunner of Dante* and for many passages from his other works, for which acknowledgement is also made under their publishers, and Mrs. Weir for a passage from the late Dr. T. H. Weir's *The Shaikhs of Morocco*.

There are many other older writers to whom I am indebted, and if any copyright material has been included without permission, this is due to accident and not intention.

My thanks are also due to the staffs of the libraries of which I have made use for this compilation : the London Library, which contains some old and rare Oriental books ; the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, which I have used continuously ; and the library of the Royal Asiatic Society, which is a veritable treasure-house.

Margaret Smith

LONDON,
JULY 1954.

I

SUFISM, ITS NATURE AND ORIGINS

SIR WILLIAM JONES

(I)

The fundamental tenets (of the Šūfīs) are that nothing exists absolutely but God, that the human soul is an emanation from His essences, and though divided for a time from its heavenly source, will be finally reunited with it ; that the highest possible happiness will arise from its reunion, and that the chief good of mankind in this transitory world consists in as perfect an union with the Eternal Spirit as the encumbrances of a mortal frame will allow ; that for this purpose, they should break all connection (*ta'alluq*) with extrinsic objects, and pass through life without attachments, as a swimmer in the ocean strikes freely without the impediment of clothes ; that they should be straight and free as the cypress, whose fruit is hardly perceptible, and not sink under a load like fruit-trees attached to a trellis ; that, if merely earthly charms have power to influence the soul, the *idea* of celestial beauty must overwhelm it in ecstatic delight ; that, for want of apt words to express the divine perfections and the ardour of devotion, we must borrow such expressions as approach the nearest to our ideas, and speak of *beauty* and *love* in a transcendent and mystical sense ; that, like a reed torn from its native brook, like *wax* separated from its delicious honey, the soul of man bewails its disunion with melancholy *musick*, and sheds burning tears like the lighted taper, waiting passionately for the moment of its extinction, as a disengagement from earthly trammels, and the means of returning to its only beloved.

The Šūfīs concur in believing that the souls of men differ infinitely in *degree*, but not at all in *kind*, from the Divine Spirit, of which they are particles, and in which they will ultimately be absorbed ; that the Spirit of God pervades the

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universe always immediately present to His work and consequently that He alone is always in substance, perfect Benevolence, perfect Truth, perfect Beauty ; that the love of Him alone is real and genuine love, while that of all other objects is always absurd and illusory : that the beauties of Nature are faint resemblances, like images in a mirror, of the Divine charms ; that from Eternity without beginning to Eternity without end the Supreme Benevolence is occupied in bestowing happiness or the means of attaining it ; that men can only attain it by performing their part of the Primal Covenant between themselves and the Creator ; that nothing has a pure, absolute existence but Mind and Spirit ; that material substances, as the ignorant call them, are no more than gay pictures presented continually to our minds by the Sempiternal Artist ; that we must beware of attachment to such phantoms and attach ourselves exclusively to God, Who truly exists in us, as we exist solely in Him ; that we retain even in this forlorn state of separation from our Beloved, the idea of heavenly beauty, and the remembrance of our primeval vows ; that sweet music, gentle breezes, fragrant flowers, perpetually renew the primary idea, refresh our fading memory and melt us with tender affections ; that we must cherish those affections, and by abstracting our souls from vanity, that is, from all but God, approximate to His essence, in our final union with which will consist our supreme beatitude.

The Sūfis . . . suppose with great sublimity both of thought and diction, an express contract, on the day of eternity without beginning, between the assemblage of created spirits and the supreme soul, from which they were detached, when a celestial voice pronounced these words, addressed to each spirit separately, "Art thou not with thy Lord ? " and all the spirits answered with one voice, " Yes ".

SIR JOHN MALCOLM

(2)

Traces of (the Soofee) doctrine exist, in some shape or other, in every region of the world. It is to be found in the most splendid theories of the ancient schools of Greece and of the modern philosophers of Europe . . . The general name which

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the Persian followers of this sect have adopted is Soofee, a term implying pure: by this all who adopt this creed are known, from the revered teacher, who is followed by thousands of disciples, to the humblest dervish or fakeer who travels about naked, begging alms to support him in a life of prayer voluntarily adopted.

The Soofees represent themselves as devoted to the search of truth and incessantly occupied in adoring the Almighty, an union with Whom they desire with all the fervour of divine love. The Creator, according to their belief, is diffused over all His creation. Some of them term the word '*alum kheal*', i.e. "a world of delusion", by which it is implied, that we are constantly, with regard to all *maddah*, or "matter", under an illusion of our senses and that it exists only from the light of God, or the animating principle which enables us to see it and makes it visible; otherwise it is in itself nothing. "The creation," they say, "proceeded at once from the splendour of God, Who poured His spirit on the universe as the general diffusion of light is poured over the earth by the rising sun; and as the absence of that luminary creates total darkness, so the partial or total absence of the divine splendour or light causes partial or general annihilation. They compare the creation in its relation to the Creator, to those small particles discernible in the rays of the sun, which are gone the moment it ceases to shine."

He exists everywhere and in everything. They compare the emanations of His essence or spirit to the rays of the sun: which, they conceive, are continually darted forth and reabsorbed. It is for this reabsorption into the divine essence, to which their immortal part belongs, that they continually sigh. They believe that the soul of man, and the principle of life which exists throughout all nature, are not from God, but of God: hence these doctrines which their adversaries have held to be most profane, as establishing an equality of nature between the created and the Creator.

The Soofee doctrine teaches that there are four stages through which man must pass, before he can reach the highest, or that of divine beatitude; when, to use their own language, "his corporeal veil will be removed, and his emancipated soul will mix again with the glorious essence from which it had been

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separated, but not divided." The first of these stages is that humanity (*nasoot*), which supposes the disciple to live in an obedience to the holy law (*sherrāh*) and an observance of all the rites, customs, and precepts of the established religion ; these being admitted to be useful in regulating the lives of the vulgar, and restraining within proper bounds such as cannot reach the heights of divine contemplation and might be corrupted and misled by that very liberty of faith which enlightens and delights those of superior intellect or more fervent devotion. The second stage, in which the disciple attains power or force (*jubroot*), is termed the road (*turrekāt*), or path ; and he who arrives at it, leaves that condition in which he is only admitted to admire and follow a teacher, and enters the path of Soofeeism. He may now abandon all observance of religious forms and ceremonies, as he exchanges practical for spiritual worship ; but this stage cannot be obtained without great piety, virtue, and fortitude, for the mind cannot be trusted in the neglect of usages and rites necessary to restrain it when weak, till it hath acquired strength from habits of mental devotion, grounded on a proper knowledge of its own dignity, and of the divine nature. The third stage is that of knowledge (*'aruf*), and the disciple who arrives at it is deemed to have attained supernatural knowledge ; in other words, to be inspired ; and he is supposed, when he reaches this state, to be equal to the angels. The fourth and last stage denotes his arrival at truth (*huckeekat*), which implies his complete union with the Divinity.

JOHN P. BROWN

(3)

In Sūfism, the idea (of sanctification) is carried so far as to declare that the spirit of man when properly purified by contemplation, religious fervour and ecstatic love, becomes even that of God, from whom it is declared it is an emanation . . . the Darvish *tarīqats* hold that by means of a certain form of worship, differing with each one, the creature approaches his Creator and that this is the object of his adoration. His spirit becomes even absorbed in that of the Divinity. The soul is a Divine emanation incorporated in a human form. It exists

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in five conditions, viz. it is awake, it dreams, it is plunged in slumber, it fills a state of half-death, and finally, is even perfectly separated from the body. During the third state, it is reabsorbed 'already in the Divine' Spirit.

It is believed (by the Şūfis) that the spirit of man communes directly with the Holy Spirit of God and that the latter, also, communes with the former, not only in visions, but even in wakeful hours, always for good and never for evil. Holy and pious men hold frequent intercourse with God, by contemplation, meditation and prayer . . . By this intercourse with God men reach a superior and more sublime character ; leading holy and, as it were, sinless lives, they become friends of God, and assume an intimate connection with Him, even in the present life. A man fully impressed with the possibility of attaining to such a position naturally regards all that is connected with the transient existence of this world as insignificant, and unworthy of any serious consideration and regard . . . The more destitute he is of worldly goods, the less his mind is connected with the ordinary cares of life, and he is left free to devote his entire existence to communion with the Creator and His Divine Spirit.

The (saints or friends of Allah) " are those who among men are the nearest united to God and who consequently enjoy His most intimate presence." " Those who, having been the enemies of themselves in this life, become the friends of God in the other." " They commenced their career before the beginning of time, and labour only for eternity." " During their lives, they never left the portals of the sacred palace of the Divinity and finally enter therein." " They discover and behold the spiritual secrets which God reveals to them, and maintain therein a religious silence."

In this world the saint hears the will of God, and in the other he understands it.

E. H. WHINFIELD

(4)

The Şūfis identified the Allah of the Koran with the Neoplatonic Being, the One, the Necessary Being, the only Reality, " the Truth ", the Infinite, which includes all actual

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being, good and evil, the First Cause, source of all action, good and evil alike. The world of phenomena and man—everything else in fact but Allah they identified with Not being . . . absolute nonentity, which like a mirror reflects Being, and by thus borrowing particles of Being rises to the rank of Contingent being, a kind of being which, as Plato says, is and is not, and partakes both of existence and non-existence. (This Not being is a sort of Manichean Ahriman, which solves all practical difficulties attaching to their speculative system.) According to their theory, the Infinite includes all being, evil included; but as this is not consistent with the goodness of the Allah of the Koran, evil is said to proceed from Not being. . . .

(The Sūfis hold that) sense and reason cannot transcend phenomena or see the real Being which underlies them all, so sense and reason must be ignored and superseded in favour of the “inner light”, the inspiration of Divine illumination in the heart, which is the only faculty whereby men perceive the Infinite. Thus enlightened, men see that the whole external phenomenal world, including man’s “self” is an illusion, non-existent in itself, and, in so far as it is non-existent, evil, because a departure from the one real Being. Man’s only duty is to shake off this illusion, this clog of Not being, to efface and die to self, and to be united with and live eternally in the one real Being—“The Truth”. In this progress to union external observances and outward forms profit little, because they keep alive the illusion of duality of man’s self-righteousness, of his personal agency and personal merit, whereas the true course is to ignore all reference to self—to be passive, that God may work—and then the Divine light and grace will enter the chamber of man’s heart and operate in him without impediment, and draw him to “the Truth”, and unite him with “The One”.

JOHN HUNT

(5)

(According to the Sūfis) God is light and that light is all which is. The phenomenal world is mere illusion, a vision which the senses take to be a something, but which is nothing.

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All things are what they are by an eternal necessity and all events so predestined that the existence of evil is impossible. On these subjects the Şüfi sects manifest a wild fanaticism which has caused them to be charged with lawlessness, but their more frequent character is that of extravagant mystics. We are come from God and we long to return to Him again, is their incessant cry. But while acknowledging a separation from God, which they regard as the worst of miseries, they yet deny that the soul of man has ever been divided from God. The words 'separated' and 'divided' may not convey the meaning of the corresponding Persian words, nor make clear to us the distinction which it is intended should be conveyed.

Perhaps there is here, logically, a contradiction; for at one time it is declared that God created all things by His breath, and everything, therefore, is both the Creator and created; and at another time this unity of God and the creator is limited to the enlightened soul. The difficulty is one we have met before, and though admitting the inadequacy of the words, we may yet understand or at least conjecture the meaning. To be reabsorbed into the glorious essence of God is the great object of the Şüfi. To attain this, he had to pass through four stages. The first is that of obedience to the laws of the prophet. The second is that state of spiritual struggling attained through this obedience when he lives more in the spirit than in the letter. In the third he arrives at knowledge and is inspired. In the fourth he attains to truth, and is completely reunited with the Deity. In this state he loses all will and personality. He is no more creature but Creator, and when he worships God it is God worshipping Himself.

T. P. HUGHES

(6)

The Şüfis believe that God only exists. He is in all things, and all things in Him, and all created beings visible and invisible are an emanation from God and not really distinct from Him. That the soul of man existed before the body in which it is confined as in a cage. The great object of the Şüfi being to escape from the trammels of humanity and to return

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to the bosom of divinity, whilst the teachings of their mystic creed are supposed to lead the soul onward, stage by stage, until it reaches the goal—*perfect knowledge*. The natural state of every Muslim is *Nāsūt* (humanity), in which state the disciple must observe the precepts of the law, or *Shari'at*, but as this is the lowest form of spiritual existence, the performance of the journey is enjoined upon every searcher after Truth.

The following are the stages (*Manzil*) which the Sūfi has to perform. Having become a searcher after God (*Tālib*), he enters the first stage of (*Ubūdiyat*), “service”. When the Divine attraction has developed his inclination into the love of God, he is said to have reached the second stage of *Ishaq*, love. This Divine love, expelling all worldly desires from his heart, he arrives at the third stage of *Zudh*, “seclusion”. Occupying himself henceforward with contemplation and the investigations of the metaphysical theories concerning the nature, attributes and works of God, which are the characteristics of the Sūfi system, he reaches the fourth stage of *Ma'rifat*, “knowledge”—(the) fifth stage is called *Wajd*, “ecstasy”. During the next stage he is supposed to receive a revelation of the true nature of the Godhead, and to have reached the sixth stage of *Haqīqat*, “truth”. The next stage is that of *Waṣl*, “union with God”, which is the highest stage to which he can go whilst in the body; but when death overtakes him, it is looked upon as a total reabsorption into the Deity, forming the consummation of his journey and the eighth and last stage of *Fanā*, “extinction”. That stage in which the traveller is said to have attained to the love of God, is the point from which the Sūfiistic poets love to discuss the doctrines of their sect. The *Sālih* or traveller, is the Lover (*Āshiq*), and God is the Beloved One (*M'ashuq*). This Divine Love is the theme of most of the Persian and Pushtu poems, which abound in Sūfiistic expressions, which are difficult of interpretation. For instance, *Sharāb*, “wine”, expresses the domination of Divine love in the heart. *Gīsū*, “a ringlet”, the details of the mysteries of Divinity. *Mai Khāna*, “a tavern”, a stage of the journey. “Mirth”, “wantonness”, and “inebriation”, signify religious enthusiasm and abstraction from worldly things . . .

The Sūfi mystic seeks, by concentration of his thoughts and affections on God, to lose his own identity.

ŞÜFISM, ITS NATURE AND ORIGINS

L. GOLDZIHER

(7)

The Şūfīs endeavoured to approach the Heavenly by way of the emotions and hoped to establish religious life, not by empty formalities, but by getting near to the Eternal . . . A pantheistic system became developed . . . Starting from a mystic love of God, it arrived at the conviction that the knowledge of "real existence is in God", "neither is there any life but in God."

Şūfism cannot be looked upon as a regularly organised sect within Islam. Its dogmas cannot be compiled into a regular system. It manifests itself in different shapes in different countries. We find divergent tendencies, according to the spirit of the teaching of distinguished theosophists, who were founders of different schools, the followers of which may be compared to Christian monastic orders. The influence of different environments naturally affected the development of Şūfism. Here we find mysticism, there asceticism, the prevailing thought.

In Şūfism the final aim is *fanā*, annihilation—the extinction of individual life—"When the consciousness of Ego and of all his belongings is absent", "When an individual is liberated from dependence on means which are capable of bringing him advantage or causing injury", "when he has no aim, no will, but is entirely absorbed in the will of God." The Şūfī does not sink into 'nothingness', but into 'omnipresence', into universal divinity. When that has happened the personal Ego is annihilated by absorption into the universal divinity. . . . According to the Şūfīs, the individual is not annihilated, but becomes one with God, a drop in the bottomless sea of Pantheism, having no independent existence. . . .

He in whom there is the perfect absence of separate personality, the submersion into absolute existence, who rises to the permanent reality of the soul, such a one has arrived at the stage of the *fanā*, namely, to the stage of annihilation; he becomes *al-insān al-Kāmil*, the perfect man. . . .

The Şūfī does not attain . . . the 'Fanā' . . . by the mere determination to reach that end . . . the perfection of *fanā* is preceded by the *fāriqa* which is reached by single stations

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on the road of the ' *ma'rifat*' , the knowledge. . . . One of the most important of the Şüfi stations is that which is called ' *Murākaba*' , that is, meditation . . . The acquirement of the capacity and its permanency in one's soul, is considered the most important preparation for the annihilation of Ego and the absolute union with Him.

E. J. W. GIBB

(8)

Şüfiism has been well described as an idealistic pantheism. It has two sides, the one philosophic, the other mystic. These are closely interwoven, in reality they are but two aspects of a single whole; but like those iridescent shells which show one or another tint according to the light in which they are viewed, Şüfiism presents its one or other aspect according to the standpoint from which it is regarded. . . .

God, Whom Şüfis and poets generally speak of as ' The Truth ' , is at once Absolute Being, the only Real Existence that ever has been or ever can be, therefore necessarily comprising within Himself all apparent existence whatsoever; and Absolute Good, therefore necessarily Absolute Beauty, Beauty being only one side or aspect of Good. Such is the Divine Nature; and having learned this, we may perceive how the phenomenal universe came into existence; for this, unlike the Absolute, is temporal, not eternal. . . . Now, as we all know, a marked characteristic of Beauty, whatever may be the form it may assume, is an innate desire of self-manifestation . . . The phenomenal universe then results from this desire of self-manifestation on the part of Absolute Beauty.

But how was this manifestation thus demanded by the Divine Nature to be brought about? It is an axiom that things can be known only through their opposites or negations. . . . Now the opposite or negation of Absolute Being, which is one and the same with Absolute Beauty and Absolute Good, is necessarily Not-Being, Not-Beauty, Not-Good. But such can have no real existence, for all real existence is of necessity comprised in Absolute Being, of which this is the negation. Not-Being is then only a phantom evoked for a season and

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for a special purpose . . . Evil has therefore no real existence . . . it is but an illusion which the conditions of manifestation have rendered necessary for a while . . .

When Not-Being became opposed to Being there appeared on the former as in a mirror, a reflection or shadow of the latter. This reflection, which partakes of the nature of both Being and Not-Being, is called Contingent Being and is none else than the phenomenal universe in which during this life we find ourselves and of which we form part . . . the universe is thus the image of Absolute Being, that is of God . . . Thus is God revealed unto Himself and unto man and thus moreover does man contain in himself the image of God . . . as that side of him which derives from Being . . . is necessarily an emanation of Divinity, he is, so far, ultimately and essentially, one with God.

But how is one to overcome the element of Not-Being ? By conquering self. And how is self to be conquered ? By Love. By Love and by Love alone, can the dark shadow of Not-Being be done away ; by Love and by Love alone, can the soul of man win back to its Divine source and find its ultimate goal in reunion with The Truth . . . In the language of the mystic poets God is ' the Beloved ', man the lover . . . The poets see the presence of God immanent in all beautiful things, but manifested most clearly and most fully in fair humanity . . . And even as it is God Who is mirrored in the fair face, it is God, the poet feels, Who looks through the lover's eyes : God beholds and loves God, and the supreme miracle of Divine self-manifestation is accomplished . . .

The real goal of the Şüfi is absorption in the Deity. The highest happiness of any being consists in the most perfect realisation of itself : the human soul realises itself most perfectly in union with the Divine Soul, so therein lies its supreme felicity. This union is achieved through the state called ' Ecstasy ' (*Häl*), and when in Ecstasy the soul is transported to the Spirit World and he beholds the mysteries . . . this state, which is not to be evoked at will, is attainable by the saints alone and the whole Şüfi life consists in training the soul to be capable of such attainment . . . the all-important factor in this work is Love, a Love which, as we have already seen, rises from the seen and temporal to the Unseen and

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Eternal. It is by this all-constraining Love that the soul is wrapt in the utter self-oblivion of ecstasy and borne aloft into the great heart of Being.

T. J. DE BOER

(9)

For the most part Mysticism kept within the pale of Orthodoxy, which was always sensible enough to allow a certain latitude to poets and enthusiasts. As regards the doctrine that God *works* in all, Dialecticians and Mystics were agreed ; but extreme Mysticism propounded the farther doctrine that God *is* all in all. From this a heterodox Pantheism was developed, which made the world an empty show, and deified the human Ego. Thus the Unity of God becomes Universal Unity : His universal activity Universal Existence. Besides God, there exist at the most only the attributes and conditions of the Sūfī souls that are tending towards Him. A psychology of feeling is developed by the Sūfī teachers. In their view, while our conceptions come to the soul from without, and our exertions amount to the externalising of what is within, the true essence of our soul consists in certain states or feelings of inclination and disinclination. The most essential of all these is Love. It is neither fear nor hope, but Love that lifts us up to God. Blessedness is not a matter of 'knowing' or of 'willing' : it is Union with the loved one . . . by the Mystics the world was sacrificed to the illuminating, loving nature of the Divine Being. The confusing multiplicity of things, as that appears to sense and conception, is removed in a yearning after the One and Beloved being. Everything, both in Being and Thinking, is brought to one central point.

T. H. WEIR

(10)

A Soofee is one who seeks to know God directly, not through a third person nor through a book. No person who is content with the theology of the schoolmen or who is satisfied to accept his faith on the authority of others will feel the need for anything higher. He who refuses to accept the popular faith on mere credit, and demands a personal knowledge of religious

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matters, before they are anything to him, is called a *mureed* . . . 'one who wishes to know', 'an enquirer', or else a *tālib*, or 'seeker', 'student'. He is represented as having set out upon a journey or *path*, the goal of which is the knowledge of the Truth—that is, of God.

The first care of the seeker after truth, who is setting out upon this journey, is to find a shaikh who will act as guide. Having found his 'shaikh', the disciple or 'companion' must cease to have any will or initiative of his own . . . His obedience must be absolute . . . The object aimed at is not to impart information, although that is implied, but to produce an elevated and semi-ecstatic condition of mind; and the knowledge of God which is hoped for is not so much a mental or sensuous perception as a sense of union of soul with God. Union with God (*wisāl*) is the highest aim of the Mystic, and he who attains to a sense of it is said to 'know God'.

In Soofee parlance, phenomenal existence is conceived of as a veil, which conceals the Truth from man's view . . . In the realm of dreams, too, it is possible for the soul to cast off this veil of existence, and to behold reality with unclouded eyes . . . certain kinds of dreams are accepted as equivalent to visions or revelations.

L. M. J. GARNETT

(ii)

The Ghazels or odes (of the Ṣūfi poets) are, to those who possess the key to their symbolic imagery, the fervent outpourings of hearts ecstasied, or, as they express it, intoxicated with spiritual love. For every word . . . has its mystical signification . . . The "Fair One", for whom in these *ghazels* Man the "Lover" sighs, is the Deity; as is also the "Loved One" whom he entreats to throw off the veil that conceals His perfect beauty from view. The "Ruby Lip" signifies the unspoken but heard and understood, words of God: "nestling in the Fair One's tresses" denotes comprehension of the hidden attributes of the Divinity; the "Embrace" is the revelation to man of the divine mysteries; "Separation" or "Absence" from the "Loved One" is the non-attainment of oneness with the Deity. "Wine" is the Divine Love; the "Cupbearer"

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the spiritual instructor, the “giver of the goblet of celestial aspiration”; the “Libertine” the Saint who has become careless of human conventionalities, the “Tavern” a place where one mortifies sensuality, and relinquishes his name and worldly fame. The “Zephyr” is the breathing of the Divine Spirit; the “Taper”, the heavenly light kindling the “Torch” which is the heart of the Lover, Man: and so through every detail. These *ghazels* breathe, indeed, in every line a spirit of ravishment and ecstasy “picturing the whole creation as filled by the Divine Love by which the most humble plant is excited to seek the sublime object of its desires”.

E. G. BROWNE

(12)

Şüfiism is a system of mysticism and as such its character is half-religious, half-philosophical. It is that form of mysticism which, though more or less current in Turkey, Egypt, India and, indeed, all Muhammadan countries, has its chief home, if not its centre and well-spring, in Persia . . . The most probable derivation (of the name) is from *şūf* (wool), according to which the Şüfis received their name from the coarse woollen raiment worn by them as a symbol of their disregard of earthly pleasures and their renunciation of wealth and luxury . . .

What does Şüfiism teach? True Şüfiism, though as a rule associated with an outward profession of Islam, regards all religions as more or less perfect or imperfect shadowings forth of the great central truth which it seeks fully to comprehend, and consequently recognises all of them as good in proportion to the measure of truth which they contain.

The great practical aim is to escape from self, and until this lesson is learnt no further advance can be made. Self is at once the primal source of suffering and of sin. That it is the source of suffering is recognised by many who know not the true remedy . . . That self is the immediate cause of every form of sin is an evident fact, taught by all the purer forms of religion. . . .

The Şüfi regards God as identical with Pure Being Şüfiism (then) is an idealist pantheism. To the Şüfi everything speaks of God. “There is nothing that does not celebrate His

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praise." He is everywhere and in everything . . . and hidden only because so evident . . .

Ṣūfism has two aspects—a philosophic and a mystical or devotional. From the former point of view, God is Pure Being: from the latter, He is Absolute Beauty, of which all earthly beauty, whether it be beauty of form, of thought, or of action, is but a dim reflection. . . . The phenomenal world is the reflection of God in the mirror of Not-Being . . . What then is the position and nature of man, the crown and consummation of Contingent Being? . . . So long as man is held captive by the illusion of self, he inevitably suffers from unsatisfied desire and unquenchable craving. He is a compound of the Real and the Unreal, the Good and Not Good, the Light and the Darkness. If he looks away from God, what does he see? A dark shadow of unreality cast by himself, which dark shadow he takes for his true self. . . . Let him learn the truth and look upward to the One (not around on the many and least of all downward at that dark shadow of unreality which he takes for himself). What does he then behold? The Light and nothing but the Light, the Good and nothing but the Good; God and nothing but God. This is the supreme happiness, the ultimate goal, the beatific vision . . . this, in a word is "Annihilation in God". The drop is merged in the Ocean; the pilgrim has reached the Shrine: the lover is united to the Beloved. "Has he ceased to exist?" you ask. No, he is one with Being. . . . All that he ever was he is and far more than that; all that he ever had he has and infinitely more. But what he has and what he is, tongue cannot say, nor ear hear. . . .

The Ṣūfis say: "God alone *IS*, and we are but the waves which stir for a moment on the surface of the Ocean of Being. Shall we say that God's creation is co-existent with Him? Then are we Manichaeans and dualists, nay polytheists; for we associate the creature with the Creator. Can we say that the sun of Being was increased at the time when the Phenomenal World first appeared? Assuredly not; for that would be to regard the Being of God as a thing finite and conditioned, because capable of enlargement and expansion. What then can we say, except that even as God (Who alone is endowed with real existence) was in the Beginning and will be in

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the end (if, indeed, one may speak of 'Beginning' and 'End' where Eternity is concerned, and where Time, the elements of this illusory dream which we call 'Life', has no place) alone in His Infinite Splendour, so also, even now, He alone IS, and all else is but as a vision which disturbs the night, a cloud which dims the Sun or a ripple on the bosom of the Ocean? . . .

To the metaphysical conception of God as Pure Being and the ethical conception of God as the Eternally Holy, the Şüfi superadds another conception, which may be regarded as the keynote of all Mysticism. To him, above all else, God is the Eternally Beautiful—*Jānān-i-Hakīkī*, the "True Beloved". Before time was He existed in His Infinite Purity, unrevealed and unmanifest . . .

The renunciation of self is the great lesson to be learned and its first steps may be learned from a merely human love. But what is called love is often selfish; rarely absolutely unselfish. The test of unselfish love is this, that we should be ready and willing to sacrifice our own desires, even life itself, to render the beloved happy, even though we know that our sacrifice will never be understood or appreciated, and that we shall therefore not be rewarded for it by an increase of love or gratitude.

Such is the true love which leads us up to God. We love our fellow creatures because there is in them something of the Divine, some dim reflection of the True Beloved, reminding our souls of their origin, home, destination. From the love of the reflection we pass to the love of light which casts it; and, loving the Light, we at length become one with It, losing the false self and gaining the True, therein attaining at length to happiness and rest, and becoming one with all that we have loved—the Essence of that which constitutes the beauty alike of a noble action, a beautiful thought, or lovely face.

Such in outline is the Şüfi philosophy.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL

(13)

(The) extraordinary vitality of the Şüfi re-statement of Islam, however, is explained when we reflect on the all-

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embracing structure of Şüfism . . . the Şüfi holds that the mere transformation of will or understanding will not bring peace; we should bring about the transformation of both by a complete transformation of feeling, of which will and understanding are only specialised forms. . . . But this formula demands a *why* and a *how* . . . a metaphysical justification of the ideal in order to satisfy the understanding; and rules of action in order to guide the will. Şüfism furnishes both . . . Like the geographical position of its home, it stands midway between the Semitic and the Aryan, assimilating ideas from both sides, and giving them the stamp of its own individuality which, on the whole, is more Aryan than Semitic in character.

(The Şüfis) enumerate the following four stages of spiritual training through which the soul—the order or reason of the Primal Light—has to pass, if it desires to realise its union or identity with the ultimate source of all things:—

- (1) Belief in the Unseen.
- (2) Search after the Unseen.
- (3) The knowledge of the Unseen. This comes . . . by looking into the depths of our own soul.
- (4) The Realisation . . .

Şüfism has looked at the Ultimate Reality from three standpoints which, in fact, do not exclude but complement each other. Some Şüfis conceive the essential nature of reality as self-conscious will, others beauty, others again hold that Reality is essentially Thought, Light or Knowledge.

R. A. NICHOLSON

(14)

The oldest type of mysticism in Islam was ascetic and devotional rather than speculative, and the word “Şüfi” first appears in literature as a name applied to a class of ascetics. In the second century of the Hijra there arose a spontaneous and wide-spread movement towards world-flight. Thousands of men and women gave themselves up to the religious life, either singly or in companionship with a

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few friends. From the injunctions which they found in the Koran to think on God and trust in God they developed the practice of *dhikr* (praise of God) and the doctrine of *tawakkul* (trust in God). Here, no doubt, they learned something from Christian asceticism . . . With the growing influence of Hellenistic ideas Moslem asceticism became mystical: ascetic exercises begin to be regarded, not as having their end in future salvation or perdition, but rather as a means of purifying the soul so that it may know and love God and attain to union with Him. . . .

What the Sūfis call "*ma'rifa*," knowledge of God, resembles the *gnosis* of Hellenistic religion: it is an immediate experience in which the intellect has no share, an ecstatic contemplation of God by the divinely illuminated heart. Moreover, it involves the effacement of the individual self and the substitution of divine qualities for human; yet all this is the act of God. Just as St. Paul said to his Galatian converts, "Now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God," so the Sūfi 'ārif or gnostic imputes all his knowledge to Him who by revealing Himself causes the veil of "otherness" and duality to disappear and the knower to be one with the known. And when Sūfis speak of the unity of God, they mean no less than this.

Sūfis, however, regard the Unity of God not as anything that can be apprehended by the intellect, but as a mystery that is revealed only to those whom God permits to realise it in their religious experience. We have seen that in order to love and know God the Sūfi must lose himself in the love and knowledge of God. Similarly the *muwahhid* or unifier of God cannot fully realise that God is One except by losing himself in the Oneness of God. Unification (*tawhīd*) is defined as "the absoluteness of the Divine nature realised in the passing-away of the human nature," so that "the man's last state reverts to his first state and he becomes even as he was before he existed".

The infinite distance between God and man God alone can annihilate; man has no power to bridge the chasm, therefore it is overcome by a *tour de force* of the omnipotent Will. That idea lies behind the whole theory and practice of religious ecstasy on which the Sūfis throw so much stress. How

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should the mystic's conscious self not be obliterated and swept away by the transcendent glory of Him who in a sudden gleam reveals Himself as ineffably near? Must not the distinction of subject and object vanish altogether? For here God is all, and there is naught beside Him.

L. MASSIGNON

(15)

It is plain that it is from the Qur'ān, constantly recited, the subject of meditation, and its teaching practised in everyday life, that Islamic mysticism originated and developed as it did.

It is thanks to its mysticism that Islam is a religion which is international and universal. It is international, because of the apostolic work of mystics who visited non-Muslim countries: it was the persuasive example of the Muslim ascetics and of the shaikhs of the religious orders, who learnt the language spoken by the people and lived among them, which won over so many Hindus and Malays to Islam, rather than the tyrannical fanaticism of conquerors of a foreign tongue. It is universal, because it was the mystics who first understood the moral efficacy of orthodoxy, the fact of a rational monotheism innate to all men, whence came the apostolic universalism of Muḥāsibī and Ibn Karrām, which degenerated into the theosophic syncretism of Ibn 'Arabī, Jalāl Rūmī and the Bektāshis.

Şūfism, which has given new life to Islam, has been a method of whole-hearted self-examination, turning to account *ab intra* all the events of life, good fortune and bad; making those who pursued it to the end, into physicians able to give help to others who were unfortunate . . . Şūfism is . . . a treatment which the physician has first tried on himself, in order to benefit others . . .

Moreover, the social importance of Islamic mysticism comes from its supposed remedial value. Have its teachers, as they maintain, been able in their inner life, to draw upon the means of "healing the sickness of heart", of dressing the wounds, of a Community injured by the errors of unworthy members? Our only means of making sure that the Islamic

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mystics, by their efforts, attained their goal, is to examine the social consequences: the value and effectiveness of their rule of life as a cure for the ills of society . . . the lasting force of Islamic mysticism . . . lay in the superhuman desire of sacrifice for one's fellows, in the transcendent ecstasy of the martyr, expressed by Ḥallāj: "Forgive them, but do not forgive me."

A. J. ARBERRY

(16)

Having noted that the area in which Islam and Sufism originated is that which witnessed the rise and triumph or rout of several other creeds each with its own particular mysticism, we shall leave this fact to speak for itself and confine our attention to Sufism as if it were an isolated manifestation; viewing the movement from within as an aspect of Islam, as though these other factors which certainly determined its growth did not exist. By following this procedure it is hoped to draw a picture recognisable as a unity in itself, a picture of a mysticism developing out of a single creed and ritual, which may then be compared and contrasted with the mysticisms of other faiths and so be seen for what it really is. For while mysticism is undoubtedly a universal constant, its variations can be observed to be very clearly and characteristically shaped by the several religious systems upon which they were based. In this varied company Sufism may be defined as the mystical movement of an uncompromising Monotheism . . .

From the earliest days of Islam, the Prophet lacked not for faithful followers who sought to copy his example and live righteously and humbly in the sight of God and man. The uprightness of their conduct and the fullness of their piety were so pleasing to their Creator that of His Infinite Goodness He chose them to be His "friends" (*auliyā'* sing. *wālī*) a term which afterwards became more or less synonymous with the Christian "saint". The Sufi, who desires earnestly to be admitted to like intimacy and privilege, is diligent in learning how these holy men conducted themselves publicly and in private, committing to mind and heart the words of wisdom

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and sanctity, the songs of devotion and heavenly love which were remembered of them.

Finally, in a life of sincere obedience to the Will of God, lived abstemiously and meditatively, guided by the Word of God, the Life of His Prophet, and the example of His saints, the Sufi is himself the recipient of such marks of favour as God may choose to vouchsafe him. Passing through the various states (*ahwāl*, sing. *hāl*) and stages (*maqāmāt*, sing. *maqām*) of the spiritual pilgrimage, he encounters many proofs of the special relationship in which he stands to God (*karāmāt*, "graces")

So guided and favoured, the Muslim mystic may hope even in this mortal life to win a glimpse of immortality by passing away from self (*fanā*) into the consciousness of survival in God (*baqā*). After death and judgment, he aspires to dwell for ever with the angels and prophets, the saints and saved, in the near and blissful Presence of the Almighty.

II

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

UNITY OF BEING. GOD AS BEAUTY AND LIGHT AND THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD GIFTS

MISHKĀT AL-MAṢĀBIḤ

(17)

He who approaches near to Me one span, I will approach to him one cubit ; and he who approaches near to Me one cubit, I will approach near to him one fathom ; and whoever approaches Me walking, I will come to him running ; and he who meets Me with sins equivalent to the whole world, I will greet him with forgiveness equal to it.

S. G. Champion.

DHU'L-NŪN

(18)

O God, I never hearken to the voices of the beasts or the rustle of the trees, the splashing of waters or the song of birds, the whistling of the wind or the rumble of thunder, but I sense in them a testimony to Thy Unity (*wahdāniya*), and a proof of Thy Incomparableness ; that Thou art the All-prevailing, the All-knowing, the All-wise, the All-just, the All-true, and that in Thee is neither overthrow nor ignorance nor folly nor injustice nor lying. O God, I acknowledge Thee in the proof of Thy handiwork and the evidence of Thy acts : grant me, O God, to seek Thy Satisfaction with my satisfaction, and the Delight of a Father in His child, remembering Thee in my love for Thee, with serene tranquillity and firm resolve.

A. J. Arberry.

AVICENNA (IBN SĪNĀ)

(19)

Since it is (thus) established that the Necessary Being cannot be two, but is All Truth, then by virtue of His Essential

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Reality, in respect of which He is a Truth, He is United and One, and no other shares with Him in that Unity: however the All-Truth attains existence, it is through Himself. . . .

Since the Necessary Being is One, and does not derive Its being from any one, it follows that He is a Necessary Being in every respect: while anything else derives its being from another. . . .

Now the Necessary Being is a perfection in pure actuality . . . every perfection belongs to Him, derives from Him and is preceded by His Essence, while every deficiency, even if it be metaphysical, is negated to Him. All perfection and all beauty are of His Being; indeed, these are the vestiges of the perfection of His Being; how then should He derive perfection from any other? . . . His Perfect Essence, preceding all relations, is One . . . His Attributes are not an augmentation of His Essence.

Since it is established that God is a Necessary Being, that He is One in every respect, that he is exalted above all causes, and that He has no reason of any kind for His Being; since it is further established that His Attributes do not augment His Essence, and that He is qualified by the Attributes of Praise and Perfection; it follows necessarily that we must state that He is Knowing, Living, Willing, Omnipotent, Speaking, Seeing, Hearing, and Possessed of all the other Loveliest Attributes.

A. J. Arberry.

BĀBĀ KŪHĪ OF SHIRĀZ

(20)

In the market, in the cloister—only God I saw.
In the valley and on the mountain—only God I saw.
Him I have seen beside me oft in tribulation;
In favour and in fortune—only God I saw.
In prayer and fasting, in praise and contemplation,
In the religion of the Prophet—only God I saw.
Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance,
Qualities nor causes—only God I saw.
I oped mine eyes and by the light of His Face around me
In all the eye discovered—only God I saw.

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

Like a candle I was melting in His fire :
Amidst the flames outflanking—only God I saw.
Myself with mine own eyes I saw most clearly,
But when I looked with God's eyes—only God I saw.
I passed away into nothingness, I vanished,
And lo, I was the All-living—only God I saw.

R. A. Nicholson.

HUJWĪRĪ

(21)

Know that I have found this universe an abode of Divine mysteries, which are deposited in created things. Substances, accidents, elements, bodies, form, and proportion—all these are veils of Divine mysteries. From the standpoint of Unification (*tawhīd*) it is polytheism to assert that any such veils exist, but in this world everything is veiled, by its being, from Unification, and the spirit is held captive by admixture and association with phenomenal being. Hence the intellect can hardly comprehend those Divine mysteries, and the spirit can but dimly perceive the marvels of nearness to God. Man, enamoured of his gross environment, remains sunk in ignorance and apathy, making no attempt to cast off the veil that has fallen on him. Blind to the beauty of Oneness, he turns away from God to seek the vanities of this world and allows his appetites to domineer over his reason, notwithstanding that the animal soul, . . . is the greatest of all veils between God and man.

R. A. Nicholson.

ABU HĀMID AL-GHAZĀLĪ

(22)

Praise be to God, the Creator and Restorer of all things, Who . . . directs His sincere servants into the right way and the straight path . . . To these, as touching His essence, He maketh known that He is One, and hath no partner, singular without anything like Him; uniform, having no contrary: separate, having no equal . . . He is the First and the Last and is within and without . . . He is

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

too high to be contained in any place and too holy to be determined by time ; for He was before time and place were created and is now after the same manner as He always was . . . He is known to exist by the apprehension of the understanding ; and He is seen as He is by immediate intuition, which will be vouchsafed out of His mercy and grace to the holy in the eternal mansion, completing their joy by the vision of His glorious presence . . . He it is Who gave all things their beginning ; He is the Creator and Restorer, the sole Operator of what He pleases . . . there is no refuge to man from his rebellion against Him but only His help and mercy : nor hath any man any power to perform any duty towards Him but through His love and will . . .

All things were created by Him . . . He created them by His power out of mere privation, and brought them into light when as yet they were nothing at all, but He himself alone existed from all eternity, neither was there any other with Him. Now, He created all things in the beginning for the manifestation of His power and His will and the confirmation of His word which was true from all eternity. Not that He stood in need of them, nor wanted them, but He manifestly declared His glory in creating and producing and commanding, without being under any obligation nor out of necessity.

Simon Ockley.

(23)

The Real Light is Allah ; and the name " light " is otherwise only predicated metaphorically and conveys no real meaning.

To explain this theme : you must know that the word light is employed with a threefold signification : the first by the Many, the second by the Few, the third by the Fewest of the Few. Then you must know the various grades of light that relate to the two latter classes and the degrees of reality appertaining to these grades, in order that it may be disclosed to you, as these grades become clear, that Allah is the highest and the ultimate Light : and further, as the reality appertaining to each grade is revealed, that Allah alone is the Real, the True Light and beside Him there is no light at all . . .

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

There are two kinds of eye, an external and an internal ; the former belongs to one world, the World of Sense, and the internal vision belongs to another world altogether, the World of the Realm Celestial. . . . In that world there are marvels, in comparison with which this world of sight is utterly condemned. He who never fares to that world, but allows the limitations of life in this world of sense to settle upon him, is still a brute-beast, an excommunicate from that which constitutes us men ; gone astray is he more than any brute-beast, for to the brute are not vouch'd the wings of flight, on which to fly away into that invisible world . . . As the rind is to the fruit ; as the mould or the form in relation to the spirit ; as darkness in relation to light ; as infernal to supernal ; so is this World of Sense in relation to the world of the Realm Celestial. For this reason the latter is called the World Supernal or the World of Spirit, or the World of Light, in contrast to the World Beneath, the World of Matter and of Darkness . . . he who is in the World of the Realm Celestial is with Allah and hath the keys of the Unseen . . .

The Lights of the Realm Celestial (are) ranged in an order ; and the highest is the one who is nearest to the Ultimate Light . . . These degrees of light do not ascend in an infinite series, but rise to a final Fountain-head who is Light in and by Himself, upon Whom comes no light from any external source and from Whom every light is effused according to its order and grade. Ask yourself, now, whether the name Light is more due to that which is illumined and borrows its light from an external source ; or to that which in itself is luminous, illuminating all else beside ? I do not believe that you can fail to see the true answer, and thus conclude that the name light is most of all due to this LIGHT SUPERNAL above Whom there is no light at all, and from Whom Light descends upon all other things. . . .

Real Being is Allah most High, even as Real Light is likewise Allah . . . For each several thing other than Allah is, when considered in and by itself, pure not-being : and if considered from the "aspect" (*wajh*) to which existence flows from the Prime Reality, it is viewed as existing, but not in itself, solely from the "aspect" which accompanies

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

Him Who gives it existence. For everything has two aspects, an aspect to itself and an aspect to its Lord: in respect of the first, it is Not-Being; but in respect of the God-aspect, it is Being. Therefore there is no Existent except God and the God-aspect, and therefore all things are perishing except the God-aspect from and to all eternity.

W. H. T. Gairdner.

'UMAR KHAYYĀM

(24)

The world is baffled in its search for Thee!

Wealth cannot find Thee, no, nor poverty:

All speak of Thee, but none have ears to hear,
Thou'rt near to all, but none have eyes to see.

The world's a body and the "Truth" its soul,
The angels are its senses, they control

Its limbs—the creatures, elements and spheres;
All *seem* to be, ONE only *is* the whole.

E. H. Whinfield.

SANĀ'Ī

(25)

O Thou Who nurtorest the mind, Who adornest the body,
O Thou Who givest wisdom, Who shovest mercy on the
foolish, Creator and Sustainer of earth and time, Guardian
and Defender of dweller and dwelling: dwelling and dweller,
all is of Thy creation: time and earth, all is under Thy com-
mand: fire and wind, water and the firm ground, all are under
the control of Thy omnipotence, O Thou the Ineffable. From
Thy throne to earth, all is but a particle of what Thou hast
created; the living intelligence is Thy swift messenger
Every tongue that moves within the mouth possesses life f-
the purpose of praising Thee: Thy great and sacred nar
are a proof of Thy bounty and beneficence and mercy. E
one of them is greater than heaven and earth and ar
they are a thousand and one, and they are ninety-
each one of them is related to one of man's needs, but
who are not in Thy secrets are excluded from them, O

27

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

of Thy grace and pity admit this heart ar
Thy name! . . .

There is a spiritual kingdom
temporal power; above the
both these principles H
spread His shad
world He has
world as
man

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

SUHRAWARDI AL-MAQTŪL

(28)

Some of my friends asked me, (saying) "Tell (us) the quality of the King's majesty and the description of His beauty and splendour." Though I am not able to achieve this, yet I will say something brief. Know, that whenever ye picture a beautiful, or a perfect thing in your thoughts, unadulterated with any ugliness, or a perfect thing which is hedged about with any perfection, there ye will find Him. For all beauties are really His: now He is the loveliness of every (lovely) face, now the generosity of every (open) hand. Whoever does His service, the same finds eternal happiness; but he that turns away from Him has lost both this world and the next.

A. J. Arber

He
To
Till ov
The 1
Night ve.
Day's n.

Then lo! fro.
Night's tress
And, from Heav
Eyes bright as
The sun sinketh do
And azure-hued v
'Tis the incense of Na
Perfuming the skies.

NIZĀMĪ OF GANJA

(29)

The Name of God is the beginning of thought and the ei
speech,
Complete thy thought and speech in His Name.
Existent before all creation, more eternal than all eternities
Revealer of the secrets of the mysterious heaven, secret
of those who know the divine mysteries. . . .
Guide to those who cultivate their souls, Source of light
those who partake of His daily bread:
He marks the brow of the saint. He crowns the kings of
world,
Beginning and end of Existence and Attributes, Creator
Destroyer of creation:
Compared with His Majesty, which is greater than both wo
our time from its beginning to its end is but an instant
He was, when all that is high and low was not; He wil
when all that exists has come to an end. . . .
The struggle of every living being is to do service to
Godhead . . .
Halting imagination travelled far and wide and returned
His door empty-handed.

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

Him Who gives it existence. For everything has two aspects, an aspect to itself and an aspect to its Lord: in respect of the first, it is Not-Being; but in respect of the God-aspect, it is Being. Therefore there is no Existent except God and the God-aspect, and therefore all things are perishing except the God-aspect from and to all eternity.

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Every tongue that moves within the mouth possesses life for
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are a proof of Thy bounty and beneficence and mercy. Each
one of them is greater than heaven and earth and angel;
they are a thousand and one, and they are ninety-nine;
each one of them is related to one of man's needs, but those
who are not in Thy secrets are excluded from them, O Lord,

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

of Thy grace and pity admit this heart and soul to a sight of Thy name! . . .

There is a spiritual kingdom in the universe, and also a temporal power ; above the throne light and below darkness ; both these principles He bestowed at the creation, when He spread His shadow over His handiwork. The temporal world He has given of His bounty to the body, the spiritual world as a glory to the soul ; that so both inner and outer man may receive food, the body from the lord of the world, the soul from the Lord of the spirit-world ; for through all His creation God keeps a benign grace for the benefit of the noble soul.

The acute thinker knows that what He does is well ; it is thou who namest some things evil and some good, otherwise (were it not for the name) all that comes from Him is pure kindness. Evil comes not into existence from Him : how can evil exist with Godhead ? Only the foolish and ignorant do evil : the Doer of good Himself does no evil.

J. Stevenson.

ANYĀRĪ

(26)

The dragon-toothed thorn in the garden,
A sting like a scorpion's shows :
He hath posted it there as a warden,
To watch o'er the delicate rose.
Till over the neck of the Heaven,
The ringlets of evening flow,
Night veils not with locks like the raven,
Day's maidenly glow.

Then lo ! from the hemisphere darkling,
Night's tresses He deftly doth part,
And, from Heaven's arched eyebrow's out sparkling,
Eyes bright as narcissus dart.
The sun sinketh down in the ocean,
And azure-hued vapours arise,
'Tis the incense of Nature's devotion,
Perfuming the skies.

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

Ere atoms were yet in existence,
His "be and it was so" had birth,
He needed not matter's assistance,
In forming this beautiful earth.
Yet its shape is symmetrical rigour
Its hues are most pleasing and bright ;
For a sphere in perfection in figure,
In colouring, light.

To the fishes bright armour He giveth,
Unto chanticleer giveth a crest—
His praise by no mortal that liveth
Can ever be duly expressed,
Till the dumb man shall make an oration,
Till the stocks and the stones shall find voice
Till the whole of the silent creation
In language rejoice.

* * *

When His love for His friend He discloses,
And His storehouse of mercy lays bare,
He turneth the fire into roses,
And embers forget what they were.

E. H. Palmer.

IBN TUFAYL

(27)

How can He in any way partake of *Non-existence*, Who is the Pure Existence, necessarily by His Essence ; Who gives Being to everything that exists, and besides Whom there is no Existence ; but *He* is the Being, *He* the Perfection, *He* the Plenitude, *He* the Beauty, *He* the Glory, *He* the Power, *He* the Knowledge ? *He* is *He*, and "besides Him all things are subject to perishing".

... this Supreme Being, Which has no Cause of His own Existence, but is the Cause why all things else exist . . . of boundless Perfection, infinite Beauty, Glory and Splendour, that is above all Splendour and Beauty, so that there exists no Perfection, Beauty, Brightness or Comeliness, but flows from It.

Simon Ockley.

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

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Guide to those who cultivate their souls, Source of light to
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He marks the brow of the saint. He crowns the kings of this
world,
Beginning and end of Existence and Attributes, Creator and
Destroyer of creation :
Compared with His Majesty, which is greater than both worlds,
our time from its beginning to its end is but an instant.
He was, when all that is high and low was not ; He will be,
when all that exists has come to an end. . . .
The struggle of every living being is to do service to His
Godhead . . .
Halting imagination travelled far and wide and returned from
His door empty-handed.

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

The mind travelled far but did not find Him : the eye searched far and wide but found none like Him. . . .
The birds on the Tree of Paradise soar towards Him ; those who walk in heaven knock also at the same door. . . .
Unity lives by His omnipotent name ; eternity is the pillar of the throne of His empire.
The sighs of the weary are His favoured guests ; His swift messengers are the feet of captives,
The heart which is purer than the soul, lays claim to being the dust of His threshold . . .
With whom shall we take refuge ? Thou art without equal.
To whom shall we fly ? Thou art our helper.
Forgive our sins, because we pray to Thee : help us because we take refuge in Thee.

G. H. Darab.

NIZĀMĪ OF GANJA

(30)

In Allah's Name, the King, the Pitying :
This Key unlocks the Treasury of the King.
With God all Thoughts arise, all Words descend ;
Then let His Name thy Recitation end,
Before the Birth of Beings transient,
Ere every Essence lasting, permanent,
This timeless World accepts His Regimen,
His Fingers grace the Everlasting Pen,
His Hand unveils the Mysteries of the Skies,
Yet veils the Secrets of the truly Wise,
Sole Origin of goodly Essences,
Sole Source of every Thing that living is,
He dights the Sun with glowing Jewelry,
He clothes with grass the Earth, with gems the Sea,
All leaders of the Faith by Him are led,
He giveth Bread to All who live by bread.
He threads with Pearls the single-corded Mind,
He lights the Intellect that else were blind :

THE ŞÜFI PATH OF LOVE

He marks their Brow who live in Piety,
And to the sceptred King gives Sov'reignty.
He brings to naught what heedless Men design,
But spares their Sins who unto Him repine :
He stills the Clamour of the fearful Heart,
And, to the knowing, Counsel doth impart.
First He and Last, in All that is and lives,
Naughts Being, and to Nothing Being gives :
Before His Might the two Worlds sink to death,
The Sun of all our days is but a Breath . . .
Nizāmī's Clay, that by His Feet is trod,
A Furrow is, where grows the Seed of God.

A. J. ARBERRY.

'ATTĀR

(31)

And as His Essence all the world pervades,
Naught in Creation is, save this alone,
Upon the waters has He fixed His Throne,
This earth suspended in the starry space,
Yet what are seas and what is air ? For all
Is God, and but a talisman are heaven and earth
To veil Divinity. For Heaven and earth,
Did He not permeate them, were but names.
Know then, that both this visible world and that
Which unseen is, alike are GOD Himself,
Naught is, save GOD ; and all that is, is GOD,
And yet, alas ! by how few is HE seen,
Blind are men's eyes, though all resplendent shines
The world by Deity's own light illumined,
O Thou whom man perceiveth not, although
To him Thou deignest to make known Thyself ;
Thou all Creation art, all we behold, but Thou,
The soul within the body lies concealed,
And Thou dost hide Thyself within the soul,
O soul in soul ! Myst'ry in myst'ry hid !
Before all wert Thou, and art more than all !

L. M. J. Garnett.

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

IBN AL-FĀRID

(32)

Lo, from behind the veil mysterious
The form of things are shown in every guise
Of manifold appearance ; and in them
An all-wise providence hath joined what stands
Opposed in nature : mute they utter speech,
Inert they move and void of splendour shine.
And so it comes that now thou laugh'st in glee,
Then weep'st anon, like mother o'er dead child,
And mournest, if they sigh, for pleasure lost,
And tremblest, if they sing, with music's joy.
Birds warbling on the boughs delight thine ear,
The while their sweet notes sadden thee within ;
Thou wondrest at their voices and their words—
Expressive unintelligible tongues !
On land the camels cross the wilderness,
At sea the ships run swiftly through the deep ;
And thou behold'st two armies—one on land,
On sea another—multitudes of men,
Clad, for their bravery, in iron mail
And fenced about with points of sword and spear.
The land-troops march on horseback or on foot,
Bold cavaliers and stubborn infantry ;
The warriors of the sea some mount on deck,
Some climb the masts like lances straight and tall.
Here in assault they smite with gleaming swords,
There, thrust with tough brown shafts of quivering
spears ;
Part drowned with fire of arrows shot in showers,
Part burned with floods of steel that pierce like flames ;
These rushing onwards, offering their lives,
These reeling broken 'neath the shame of rout ;
And catapults thou seest hurling stones
Against strong fortresses and citadels,
To ruin them. And apparitions strange
Of naked viewless spirits thou mayst espy,
That wear no friendly shape of humankind,
For genies love not men.

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

And in the stream
The fisher casts his net and draws forth fish ;
And craftily the fowler sets a snare
That hungry birds may fall in it for corn.
And ravening monsters wreck the ships at sea,
And lions in the jungle rend their prey,
And in the air some birds, and in the wilds
Some animals hunt others. And thou seest
Many a form besides, whose names I pass,
Putting my trust in samples choice, tho' few.

Regard now what is this that lingers not
Before thine eye and in a moment fades.
All thou beholdest is the act of One
In solitude, but closely veiled is He,
Let Him but lift the screen, no doubt remains :
The forms are vanished, He alone is all ;
And thou, illumined, knowest that by His light
Thou find'st His actions in the senses' night.

R. A. Nicholson

IBN AL-'ARABĪ

(33)

Sublimity (*'ulūww*) belongs to God alone. The essences (*a'yān*) of things are in themselves non-existent, deriving what existence they possess from God, Who is the real substance (*'ayn*) of all that exists. Plurality consists of relations (*nisab*), which are non-existent things. There is really nothing except the Essence, and this is (sublime) transcendent for itself, not in relation to anything, but we predicate of the One Substance sublimity (transcendence) in respect of the modes of being attributed to it : hence we say that God is (*huwa*) and is not (*lā huwa*) . . . He is the First, the Last, the Outward, the Inward ; He is the substance of what is manifested and the substance of what remains latent at the time of manifestation ; none sees Him, since He is manifested to Himself and hidden from Himself ; . . . The inward says "No" when the outward says "I", and the outward says "No" when the inward says "I", and so in the case of every

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

contrary, but the speaker is One, and He is substantially identical with the hearer . . . The Substance is One, although its modes are different. None can be ignorant of this, for every man knows it of himself, and Man is the image of God. . . .

The Creator Who is declared to be incomparable (*mumazzah*) is the creatures who are compared (*mushabbah*) with Him—by reason of His manifesting Himself in their forms—albeit the creatures have been distinguished from the Creator. The Creator is the creature, and the creature is the Creator: all this proceeds from the Essence; nay, He is the One Essence and the many (individualised) essences . . . Who is nature and Who is all that is manifested from her? . . . Nay, the Essence is (in reality) Nature. The world of Nature is many forms in One Mirror; nay, One Form in diverse mirrors. Bewilderment arises from the difference of view, but those who perceive the truth of what I have stated are not bewildered.

R. A. Nicholson.

(34)

A diver, who essayed to bring to shore the red jacinth of Deity hidden in its resplendent shell, emerged from that ocean empty-handed, with broken arms, blind, dumb and dazed. When he regained his breath and when his senses were no longer obscured, he was asked, "What hath disturbed thee and what is this thing that hath befallen thee?" He answered, "Far is that which ye seek! Remote is that which ye desire! None ever attained unto God and neither spirit nor body conceived the knowledge of Him. He is the Glorious One Who is never reached, the Being Who possesses but is not possessed. Inasmuch as before His attributes the mind is distraught and the reason totters, how can they attain unto His very essence?"

R. A. Nicholson.

RŪMĪ

(35)

In whatever place we may set our foot, we are always, Lord, within Thy resort. In whatever place or corner we may

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

entrench ourselves, we are always near to Thee. Perhaps, we say, there is a path which leads elsewhere, and yet, let our pathway be whatever it will, it invariably leads to Thee.

J. P. Brown.

(36)

The real Workman is hidden in His workshop,
Go you into that workshop and see Him face to face.
Inasmuch as over that Workman His work spreads a curtain,
You cannot see Him outside His work.
Since His workshop is the abode of the Wise One,
Whoso seeks Him without is ignorant of Him.
Come, then, into His workshop, which is Not-being (i.e.
annihilation of self and all phenomenal being)
There you may see the Creator and creation at once
Whoso has seen how bright is the workshop
Sees how obscure is the outside of that shop.
Thou art hidden from us, though the heavens are filled
With Thy light, which is brighter than sun and moon !
Thou art hidden, yet revealest our hidden secrets !
Thou art the source that causes our rivers to flow.
Thou art hidden in Thy essence, but seen by Thy bounties.
Thou art like the water, and we like the millstone.
Thou art like the wind and we like the dust ;
The wind is unseen, but the dust is seen by all.
Thou art the spring, and we the sweet green garden ;
Spring is not seen, though its gifts are seen.
Thou art as the soul, we as hand and foot ;
Soul instructs hand and foot to hold and take.
Thou art as reason, we like the tongue ;
'Tis reason that teaches the tongue to speak.
Thou art as joy, and we are laughing ;
The laughter is the consequence of the joy.
Our every motion every moment testifies,
For it proves the presence of the Everlasting God.

E. H. Whinfield.

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

'IRĀQĪ

(37)

He perfect is alone, and glorious
for evermore, His Unity supreme
above imagining, His wondrous work
beyond analysis. I do not say,
He is the soul's soul : whatso'er I say,
that He transcends, for He is free of space,
and may not be attained by swiftest thought
or further sense. Before His essence true
denial, affirmation, both are vain,
Whatever thing is borne by sense to mind
or shaped in fantasy, be all the fruit
or all the mind, all has its life in Him,
nay, all is He. Whatever else but Him
in either world appears is but the double
described in image by the twisted eye.
His word is first and last : He of creation
outward and inward is. The body's house
is lighted through the spirit's open door
by radiance divine, He is the light
of heaven and earth, His everlasting ray
The Holy Spirit. Whoso'er has light
within his soul, the ground thereof is light :
within the lantern's glass the niche of night
to radiant morn is turned, and when the soul
sits thus with light, thereafter the heart's steel
contacting it is quickened into flame.
So made the Friend similitude twixt light
and fire, and from that day our lot was cast.
When the Beloved His Face doth show, my sight
augments to vision. Never human eye
hath won pre-excellence above the glance
irradiated by the light of God :
if thou wilt only thine own sight regard,
thine eye sees not, save by the light of God.
If thou wouldest serve the Friend, and win His grace,
He is thine eye, thine ear, thy tongue, thy brain ;

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

And since through Him thou speakest, and through Him
hearest, before His Being thou art naught ;
for so, when shines the sun's own radiance,
the light of stars is darkened. Never man
of own purpose unto Him hath won,
yet by His power thou canst behold His face !
though earth may not attain the pure world, soul
shall yet by Soul perceive. The shaft of thought
that silences the shout of alleluia
is honey to the heart, and I am dumb :
I cannot count His praises infinite.

A. J. Arberry.

(38)

Cups are those a-flashing with wine,
Or sun through the clouds a-gleaming
So clear in the wine and the glass so fine
That the two are one in seeming.
The glass is all and the wine is naught,
Or the glass is naught and the wine is all :
Since the air the rays of the sun hath caught
The light combines with night's dark pall,
For the night hath made a truce with the day,
And thereby is ordered the world's array.
If thou know'st not which is day, which night,
Or which is goblet and which is wine,
By wine and cup divine aright
The Water of Life and its secret sign :
Like night and day thou mayst e'en assume
Certain knowledge and doubt's dark gloom.
If these comparisons clear not up
All these problems low and high,
Seek for the world-reflecting cup
That thou mayst see with reason's eye
That all that is, is He indeed,
Soul and loved one and heart and creed.

E. G. Browne.

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

(39)

The derivation of both Lover and Beloved is from Love, which, in its Abode of Glory, is exempt from differentiation, and, in the Sanctuary of its own Identity, is sanctified from inwardness and outwardness. Yea, in order to display its perfection, in such way as is identical with Its Essence and (equally) identical with its Attributes, it shows itself to itself in the Mirror of Loverhood and Belovedness, and reveals its Beauty to its own Contemplation by means of the Seer and the Vision. Thus the names of Loverhood and Belovedness appeared, and the description of the Seeker and the Quest became manifest. It showed the Outward to the Inmost, and the voice of Loverhood arose: it showed the Inmost to the Outward, and the name of Belovedness was made plain.

No atom doth exist apart from It, that Essence single:
'Tis when Itself it doth reveal that first those 'others'
mingle.

O Thou whose outward seeming Lover is, Beloved Thine
Essence
Who hitherto e'er saw the Object Sought seek its own
presence.

Love, by way of Belovedness, became the Mirror of the Beauty of Loverhood, so that therein it might behold its own Essence, and by way of Loverhood the Mirror of Belovedness, so that therein it might contemplate its own Names and Attributes. Although but one object is beheld by the Eye of Contemplation, yet when one face appears in two mirrors, assuredly in each mirror a different face appears.

The Face is only one, yet multiple
When thou in many mirrors see'st it.

O how can 'Otherness' appear when whatsoe'er existeth here
In essence is that Other One becoming to our vision clear?

E. G. Browne.

SA'DI OF SHIRAZ

(40)

They that are vowed to the Temple of His glory confess the shortcoming of their devotion, saying, "We have not

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worshipped Thee duly," and they that laud the splendour of His beauty fall into bewilderment, saying, "We have not known Thee truly."

Ask me not His description ! Nay, for how,
How might I senseless of the Signless speak ?
We lovers are the slain of the Beloved,
'Tis idle of the slain a voice to seek.

A certain mystic had bowed his head in holy meditation and plunged deep into the sea of divine vision. When he came back to himself, one of his companions said pleasantly, "What gift dost thou bring to us from the garden where thou hast been ?" He answered, "It was in my mind, when I saw the rose-bush, to fill my skirt with roses and bring them home to you, but their perfume so enravished me that my skirt slipped from my hand."

O nightingale, learn of the moth to love,
That shrivels in the flame without a sigh.
They know not Thee, whom they pretend it of,
Who knows indeed, knows naught eternally.
Beyond imagination Thou dost move,
Higher than all is said, writ, heard of, high :
And so, when life has ebbed and we depart,
The first poor line of Thee is all our art.

R. A. Nicholson.

NAFASĪ

(41)

The Şūfis consider it an axiom that the world must have had a Creator. They affirm that He is One, Ancient, First and Last, the End and Limit of all things, Incomparable, Unchangeable, Indivisible, not subject to the laws of time, place or direction ; possessing the attributes of holiness, and exempt from all opposite qualities . . . they further assert that He is Infinite and Illimitable, by which they mean not only without beginning or end, but also without determinate position of time, place or direction. The Nature of God,

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according to them, is an infinite and illimitable light, a boundless and fathomless Ocean, compared with which the entire universe is more insignificant than a drop of water in the sea. There is no single atom of existent beings which God does not pervade, comprise and comprehend: God is always near to man, but man is always far from God, because he is not aware of His proximity. The proximity of God to all created beings is the same, for the highest and lowest are alike in His sight. The light of God is the only thing that can reveal this proximity to the traveller . . .

The Traveller who has discovered this proximity possesses the one thing needful and has completed the journey to God, but until he shall have overcome the restraints of time and place his steps can never border on the threshold of Eternity.

... The beautiful truth (is) that He is ever near to those who seek Him, whilst those only are far from Him who by their actions fail to acknowledge that He is Omnipresent and Omniscient, knowing and seeing all they do. . . .

The Sūfīs say that there is no road from man to God, because the nature of God is illimitable and infinite, without beginning or end or even direction. There is not a single atom of existent things with which God is not and which God does not comprise: "Are they not in doubt concerning the union with their Lord? doth He not comprise everything?" Nor is there aught which He does not comprehend with His knowledge. "Verily God comprehendeth all things". The Traveller who has not attained to this Divine Light can have no lot or portion with God, but those who have reached it gaze always upon His face; they go not forth by day and retire not to rest at night without an abashed consciousness that God is present everywhere: for with Him they live and in Him they act.

The whole universe compared with the majesty of God is as a drop in the ocean, nay infinitely less than this. But Perception or Intelligence can never lead to this conviction or reveal this glorious mystery; that is the province of the Divine Light alone. Such is the Sūfī-istic explanation of the proposition, "There is no road from man to God."

E. H. Palmer.

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AWHADU'D-DĪN OF KIRMĀN

(42)

While the hand moves, the shadow moveth too :
What else indeed, can the poor shadow do ?
'Tis but the hand which makes the shadow fall,
The shadow, then, no substance hath at all.
To call 'existent' what no Being hath,
Save through another, is not Wisdom's Path.
Absolute Being only doth wise men call
Being and naught save God exists at all.
That which existent but through God became
Is NOT in truth, but only IS in name.
And yet the Artist loves His work, 'tis clear ;
There's none but He, so be thou of good cheer.
Himself at once the Truth doth hear and tell,
The Face He shows He doth perceive as well.,
Know, then, by Allah, for a certainty
That nothing else existence hath save He.

E. G. Browne.

IBN 'ĀTĀ' ALLAH OF ALEXANDRIA

(43)

O God, seek me out of Thy Mercy that I may come to Thee ; and draw me on with Thy Grace that I may turn to Thee.

O God, I shall never lose all hope of Thee even though I disobey Thee ; and I shall never cease to fear Thee even though I obey Thee.

O God, the very worlds have themselves driven me unto Thee, and my knowledge of Thy Bounty has brought me to stand before Thee.

O God, how shall I be disappointed seeing that Thou art my hope ; or how shall I be despised seeing that in Thee is my trust ?

O Thou Who art veiled in the shrouds of Thy Glory, so that no eye can perceive Thee ! O Thou Who shinest forth in the perfection of Thy Splendour, so that the heart (of the mystics) have realised Thy Majesty ! How shalt Thou be hidden, seeing that Thou art ever Manifest ; or how shall Thou be absent, seeing that Thou art ever Present, and watchest over us ?

A. J. Arberry.

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SHABISTARI

(44)

Not being is the mirror of absolute Being,
Therein is reflected the shining of "The Truth".
When Not being is set opposite to Being,
It catches its reflection in a moment.
That Unity is exposed to view in this plurality,
Like as when you count one it becomes many.
Though all numbers have one for their starting-point,
Nevertheless you never come to the end of them.
Not being is the mirror, the world the reflection, and man
Is as the reflected eye of The unseen Person,
You are that reflected eye, and He the light of the eye,
The world is a man and man is a world.
When you look well into the root of this matter,
He is at once seer, seeing eye and thing seen.
In the wing of a gnat is the ocean of life,
In the pupil of the eye a heaven.
What though the corn grain of the heart be small,
It is a station for the Lord of both worlds to dwell therein.
Beneath the veil of each atom is hidden
The heart-nourishing beauty of the Beloved's face.
To him whose soul attains the beatific vision,
The universe is the book of "The Truth Most High".
The manifestation of differences and plurality of things
Proceed from the chameleon contingent
Since the Being in all of them is One,
They all bear witness to the unity of "The Truth".

E. H. Whinfield.

(45)

All sects but multiply the I and Thou :
This I and Thou belong to partial being ;
When I and Thou and several being vanish,
Then Mosque and Church shall bind thee never more,
Our individual life is but a phantom :
Make clear thine eye, and see Reality !

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Go, soul ! with Moses to the wilderness,
And hear with him that grand ' I am the Lord ! '
While, like a mountain that shuts out the sun,
Thine I lifts up its head, thou shalt not see Me,
The lightning strikes the mountain into ruins
And o'er the levelled dust the glory leaps !

R. A. Vaughan.

HĀFIZ

(46)

O God ! since for our every want Thou dost provide,
And art our Judge, our all-sufficient Helper, Guide ;

Why should I tell the secrets of my heart to Thee
Who art Omniscient, and from Whom no secrets hide ?

The express image of the word " Divine " art Thou !
The mirror of all loveliness art Thou !

Without Thee in this world naught of itself exists ;
Search where we will, we surely find all, all is—Thou !

Sole object of my heart's desire and love art Thou !
Sole Source of all the passionate love I feel art Thou !

When'er I look upon the world and Time, I see
All, all is Thou to-day—to-morrow all is Thou.

Anonymous.

(47)

O Beauty worshipped ever
With what sweet pain and joy,
Hid from the world's endeavour
But seen by spirit's eye !

Alike in mosque and tavern
Thou art my only thought ;
The hermit in his cavern,
He seeks what I have sought.

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Belov'd, unveil the splendour
Of all the skies and spheres—
Let thy moon-face so tender
Swim through my stormy tears !

R. A. Nicholson.

MAGHRIBI

(48)

When the Sun of Thy Face appeared, the atoms of the Two worlds Became manifest.
When the Sun of Thy Face cast a shadow, from that shade Things became apparent.
Every atom, through the Light of the Sun of Thy Countenance, became manifest like the Sun.
The atom owes its existence to the Sun, while the Sun becomes manifest through the atom.
The Ocean of Being was tossed into waves ; it hurled a wave towards the shore.
That wave sunk and rose in some heart-delighting raiment and form.
Like violets the Ideas sprung up like the pleasant down on some fair beauty's face.
The anemones of the (Eternal) Realities blossomed ; a thousand tall cypresses appeared.
What were all these ? The counterpart of that Wave ; and what was that Wave ? Identical (in substance) with the Ocean.
Every particle which exists is identical with the whole ; then is the whole altogether the parts.
What are the parts ? The manifestations of the All ; what are things ? The shadows of the Names.
What are the Names ? The revelation of the Sun, the Sun of the Beauty of the Supreme Essence.
What is the Shore ? The land of Contingent Being, which is the Book of God Most High.
O Maghribi, cease this discourse : do not make plain the Mystery of the Two Worlds.

E. G. Browne.

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(49)

That One who was hidden from us came and became us,
And He who was of us and you became us and you.
The King of the topmost throne of Sovereignty condescended,
And, notwithstanding that there is no King save Him, be-
came a beggar.
He who is exempted from poverty and wealth
Came in the garb of poverty in order to show forth (true)
riches.
Who hath ever heard aught stranger than this, that one and
the same person
Became both his own house and his own householder ?
That pure substance and that peerless pearl
When it germinated became earth and heaven.
Into the raiment of 'how-ness' and 'why-ness' one cannot
say
How and why that 'how-less' and 'why-less' Charmer of
hearts entered.

...

That Sun of the Eternal Sphere shone forth
So that it became Western (Maghribi) and Eastern, Sun and
Light.

E. G. Browne.

(50)

O Thou in whose life-giving Face all the Universe is manifest,
And O Thou whose Countenance is apparent in the Mirror of
the Universe !

...

Every instant Thy Countenance displays the beauty of its
features
To its own eyes, in a hundred fair vestments.
It looked forth from lovers' eyes
So that it beheld Its Beauty in the face of Idols.
Thy Face wrought a Mirror for Its self-display,
And called that mirror '*Adam and Eve*'.
He beheld the Beauty of His Face in every face through him,
And therefore hath he become the Mirror of all the Names.

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O Thou whose beauty hath shone forth to Thine own eyes,
Since Thou art at once the Seer and the Seen, there is none
other than Thee :

Wherefore, then, hath all this strife become apparent ?

O Maghribī, the horizons are filled with clamour

When my King of Beauty pitches His tent in the Plain !

E. G. Browne.

SHĀH NI'MATU'LLĀH

(51)

Know that the Named is one and the Names a hundred thousand,

That Being is one, but its aspects are a hundred thousand.

Its form is the Glass, and its Meaning the Wine,

Although both are one substance in our eyes.

Perceive in two one unit and two units ;

Search it out well, for I have told you a good bit.

Without His Being all the world is non-existent,

Of His Being and Bounty the world is a sign.

The world arises from the diffusion of His universal Being ;

Whatever thou seest is from His universal Bounty.

His Ipseity is essential, while our Ipseity

Is but casual : be annihilated, then, from this annihilation !

The Ipseity of the world is the veil of the world :

Nay, the world itself is the veil of the world.

The veil is eternal, O my soul,

O my Friend of God, and O my Proof !

I tell thee the state of the world in its entirety,

So that thou may'st know the state of the world, and so
farewell !

E. G. Browne.

PIR JAMĀL

(52)

O Master, know that the Greatest Name (of God) is Love ;
The most noble is Love, because the most ancient is Love.
The instruction of teachers and the perception of intellects
And the Holy Spirit and Jesus the Son of Mary—is Love.

R. A. Nicholson.

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JĀMĪ

(53)

O thou whose memory quickens lovers' souls,
Whose fount of joy renewes the lover's tongue,
Thy shadow falls across the world, and they
Bow down to it; and of the rich in beauty
Thou art the riches that makes lovers mad.

For lov'd and lover are not but by Thee,
Nor beauty; mortal beauty but the veil
Thy heavenly hides behind, and from itself
Feeds, and our hearts yearn after as a bride
That glances past us veil'd—but even so
As none the beauty from the veil may know.
How long wilt Thou continue thus the world
To cozen with the phantom of a veil
From which Thou only peepest? Time it is
To unfold Thy perfect Beauty. I would be
Thy lover, and Thine only—I, mine eyes
Seal'd in the light of Thee to all but Thee,
Yea, in the revelation of Thyself
Self-lost, and conscience-quit of good and evil.
Thou movest under all the forms of truth,
Under the forms of all created things:
Look where I will, still nothing I discern
But Thee in all the universe.

Edward Fitzgerald.

(54)

The essence of the "Truth" most glorious and most exalted is nothing but Being. His Being is not subject to defect or diminution. He is untouched by change or variation, and is exempt from plurality and multiplicity; He transcends all manifestations and is unknowable and invisible. Every "how" and "why" have made their appearance through Him; but in Himself He transcends every "how" and "why". Everything is perceived by Him, while He is

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beyond perception. The outward eye is too dull to behold His beauty, and the eye of the heart is dimmed by the contemplation of His perfection.

Thou, for whose love I've sacrificed existence,
Art, yet art not, the sum of earth's existence ;
Earth lacks true Being, yet depends thereon—
Thou art true Being : Thou art pure existence.

The Loved One is quite colourless, O heart ;
Be not engrossed with colours, then, O heart :
All colours come from what is colourless,
And " who can dye so well as God ", O heart ?

The Absolute Beauty is the Divine Majesty endued with (the attributes of) power and bounty. Every beauty and perfection manifested in the theatre of the various grades of beings is a ray of His perfect beauty reflected therein. It is from these rays that exalted souls have received their impress of beauty and their quality of perfection. Whosoever is wise derives his wisdom from the Divine wisdom. Wherever intelligence is found it is the fruit of the Divine intelligence. In a word, all are attributes of Deity which have descended from the zenith of the Universal and Absolute to the nadir of the particular and relative. (They have descended) to the end that thou mayest direct thy course from the part towards the Whole, and from the relative deduce the Absolute, and not imagine the part to be distinct from the Whole, nor be so engrossed with what is merely relative as to cut thyself off from the Absolute.

The Loved One's rose-parterre I went to see,
That beauty's Torch espied me, and, quoth He,
" I am the tree ; these flowers My offshoots are.
Let not these offshoots hide from thee the tree."

What profit rosy cheeks, forms full of grace,
And ringlets clustering round a lovely face ?

When Beauty Absolute beams all around,
Why linger finite beauties to embrace ?

E. H. Whinfield.

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(55)

From all eternity the Beloved unveiled His beauty in the solitude of the Unseen ;
He held up the mirror to His own face, He displayed His loveliness to Himself.
He was both the spectator and the spectacle ; no eye but His had surveyed the universe.
All was One, there was no duality, no pretence of ' mine ' or ' thine '.
The vast orb of Heaven, with its myriad incomings and outgoings, was concealed in a single point.
The Creation lay cradled in the sleep of non-existence, like a child ere it has breathed.
The eye of the Beloved, seeing what was not, regarded non-existence as existent.
Although He beheld His attributes and qualities as a perfect whole in His own essence,
Yet He desired that they should be displayed to Him in another mirror,
And that each one of His eternal attributes should become manifest accordingly in a diverse form.
Therefore He created the verdant fields of Time and Space and the life-giving garden of the world,
That every bough and leaf and fruit might show forth His various perfections.
The cypress gave a hint of His comely stature, the rose gave tidings of His beauteous countenance.
Wherever Beauty peeped out, Love appeared beside it ; wherever Beauty shone in a rosy cheek, Love lit his torch from that flame.
Wherever Beauty dwelt in dark tresses, Love came and found a heart entangled in their coils.
Beauty and Love are as body and soul ; Beauty is the mine and Love the precious stone.
They have always been together from the very first : never have they travelled but in each other's company.

R. A. Nicholson.

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(56)

In solitude, where Being signless dwelt,
And all the Universe still dormant lay
Concealed in selflessness, One Being was
Exempt from "I" or "Thou"-ness and apart
From all duality; Beauty Supreme,
Unmanifest, except unto Itself
By Its own light, yet fraught with power to charm
The souls of all; concealed in the Unseen,
An Essence pure, unstained by aught of ill.

But Beauty cannot brook
Concealment and the veil, nor patient rest
Unseen and unadmired: 'twill burst all bonds,
And from Its prison-casement to the world
Reveal Itself. See where the tulip grows
In upland meadows, how in balmy spring
It decks itself; and how amidst its thorns
The wild rose rends its garment, and reveals
Its loveliness. Thou, too, when some rare thought,
Or beauteous image, or deep mystery
Flashes across thy soul, canst not endure
To let it pass, but hold'st it, that perchance
In speech or writing thou may'st send it forth
To charm the world.

Wherever Beauty dwells
Such is its nature, and its heritage
From Everlasting Beauty, which emerged
From realms of purity to shine upon
The worlds, and all the souls which dwell therein.
One gleam fell from It on the Universe,
And on the angels, and this single ray
Dazzled the angels, till their senses whirled
Like the revolving sky. In divers forms
Each mirror showed It forth, and everywhere
Its praise was chanted in new harmonies.

Each speck of matter did He constitute
A mirror, causing each one to reflect

THE ŞÜFI PATH OF LOVE

The beauty of His visage. From the rose
Flashed forth His beauty, and the nightingale
Beholding it, loved madly. From that Light
The candle drew the lustre which beguiles
The moth to immolation. On the sun
His Beauty shone, and straightway from the wave
The lotus reared its head. Each shining lock
Of Leylā's hair attracted Majnūn's heart
Because some ray divine reflected shone
In her fair face. 'Twas He to Shirīn's lips
Who lent that sweetness which had power to steal
The heart from Parvīz, and from Ferhād life.

His Beauty everywhere doth show itself,
And through the forms of earthly beauties shines
Obscured as through a veil. He did reveal
His face through Joseph's coat, and so destroyed
Zuleykhā's peace. Where'er thou seest a veil,
Beneath that veil He hides. Whatever heart
Doth yield to love, He charms it. In His love
The heart hath life. Longing for Him, the soul
Hath victory. That heart which seems to love
The fair ones of this world, loves Him alone.

Beware ! say not, ' He is All-Beautiful,
And we His lovers '. Thou art but the glass,
And He the face confronting it, which casts
Its image on the mirror. He alone
Is manifest, and thou in truth art hid.
Pure Love, like Beauty, coming but from Him,
Reveals itself in thee. If steadfastly
Thou canst regard, thou wilt at length perceive
He is the mirror also—— He alike
The Treasure and the Casket. ' I ' and ' Thou '
Have here no place, and are but phantasies
Vain and unreal. Silence ! for this tale
Is endless, and no eloquence hath power
To speak of Him. 'Tis best for us to love,
And suffer silently, being as naught.

E. G. Browne.

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USŪLĪ

(57)

Each wave that riseth on the Sea of Absolute Existency
Declares the secret 'I am God' or openly or secretly.

All things are mines, and of their quintessel nature they beget,
Some gold, some silver, other stones and clods of earth, in
Verity.

Although in truth this orchard hath one water and one Gardener,
What myriad trees do grow herein from multiform reality !

Behold the race of men and see how some are poison, sugar
some ;

How great a marvel diverse fruits appearing on a single tree !

What myriad acts are ordered fair, what myriad shows are
brought to naught ;

How passing strange a work is this, whereof no workmen we
can see !

Lo, thou hast entered and shalt quit this fane nine-domed,
hexagonal ;

Yet neither entrance-door nor gate of exit is beheld of thee.

How sore must labour the Adept ere he attain perfection's
point

What blood the mine must drain to form a single gem of
radiancy.

E. J. W. Gibb.

FAZLĪ

(58)

Most Merciful ! Thou madest man and jinn ;
All-hidden, manifest, without, within.
Man Thou ordainest noblest of the whole,
Most perfect both in beauty and in soul,
The human face Thou mad'st the mirror bright,

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

The lamp-niche whence is shed Thy Beauty's light,
Thou bad'st the fairness of the fair shine clear,
And thus hast made Thy Beauty's sun appear.
Thou in the beauty of the fair art shown ;
Oh, how should any lovely one be fair
Saving in her Thy Beauty mirrored were ?

• • • •
What doth a handful dust possess of might
That it should shine a sun the earth to light ?

• • • •
Thou through the fair Thy Beauty hast disclosed,
Through such Thy Loveliness hast Thou exposed,
Thou look'st through lovers' eyes, O Lord of Might,
And naught save Thine own Beauty meets Thy sight
Thou'rt thus the Lover of Thy Beauty grown ;
None's worthy of Thee save Thyself alone !

• • • •
Thou art alone the Truth mid all that seems,
All else beside is fantasy and dreams.

• • • •
Lord, though I serve Thee not with formal part,
I yield to Thee the worship of the heart,
Since 'tis Thy Unity which I believe,
Thy ritual do I behind me leave,
Teach Thou to me Unification's way,
And guide me in the dervish-path, I pray.

• • • •
Far from my heart put all that leads from Thee,
And fill my soul through love with radiancy,
Let it be Thou who ever meet'st my gaze,
And let my tongue recite Thy name always
So let my heart be filled with love for Thee,
And with Thy Unity's bright mystery,
That Being's secret to my soul lie bare,
That whereso'er my heart its glance may turn,
It may in all the Face of God discern !

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Deep draughts of Love unto my spirit give,
My self annihilate that I may live !

And that my heart 'No God but God ! ' may cry ;
Nor ever aught save God alone descry.
To such destruction point my soul the way,
That one to her become the Yea and Nay !

E. J. W. Gibb

MUNĪF

(59)

When the reed pen of the edict 'Be' the sun of all did write,
Bounden by the laws of Being were all things soe'er forthright;
Over yonder draught, the patent of Nonentity to rule,
Was there drawn the line of cancel by the pen of Heavenly
might,

Borne away was that thick blackness of the night of cecity ;
Every darkling nook and cranny spread a spacious plain in
sight,

He, the Everlasting Master, decked the veil of things beheld,
One by one all kinds of forms and figures shone there wonder-
bright.

Broken though appears the sequence of the pictures of things
seen,

Yet their true selves, hidden inward, each to other joined, unite.
Through the pencil of yon Manes, Power Divine, earth's every
page

Straight became the leaves of that fair volume Engelyūn that
hight.¹

One of hue appear to them to see with vision clear and keen
All these shows so strange and wondrous with chameleon tints
bedight.

E. J. W. Gibb.

¹ Engelyūn is another name for the Erteng or collection of pictures painted
by Māni (Manes) the ancient Persian artist.

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ANONYMOUS

(60)

O Thou Eternal One ! whose presence bright
All space doth occupy ! all nature guide ;
Unchanged through Time's all-devastating flight,
Thou only God ! There is no God beside.

Being above all things ! Mighty One !
When none can comprehend and none explore :

Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone :
Embracing all-supporting—ruling o'er—
Being whom we call God—and know no more !

In its sublime research, Philosophy
May measure out the ocean deep—may count
The sands, or the sun's rays ; but, God, for Thee
There is no weight nor measure ; none can mount

Up to Thy mysteries, Reason's brightest spark,
Though kindled by Thy light, in vain would try

To trace Thy counsels, infinite and dark ;
And thought is lost ere thought can soar so high,
E'en like past moments in eternity.

Thou from primeval nothingness did'st call
First Chaos, then Existence, Lord, on Thee

Eternity hath its foundations : all
Spring forth from Thee ; of Light, Joy, Harmony,
Sole origin—all life, Beauty, Thine.

Thy word created all and doth create :

Thy splendour fills all space with rays Divine,
Thou art, and wert, and shalt be glorious ! great !
Life-giving, life-sustaining Potentate.

Thy chains the unmeasured universe surround,
Upheld by Thee, by Thee inspired with breath !

Thou the beginning with the end hast bound,
And beautifully mingled life and Death !

As sparks mount upwards from the fiery blaze,
So suns are born, so worlds spring forth from Thee !

And as the spangles in the sunny rays
Shine round the silver snow, the pageantry
Of Heaven's bright army glitters in Thy praise.

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A million torches lighted by Thy hand
Wander unwearied through the blue abyss ;
They own Thy power, accomplish Thy command,
All gay with life, all eloquent with bliss :
What shall we call them ? Piles of crystal light ?
A glorious company of golden streams ?
Lamps of celestial ether burning bright ?
Suns, lighting systems with their joyous beams ?
But Thou, to those, art as the noon to night.

J. P. Brown.

III

THE HUMAN SOUL

ITS NATURE AND ORIGIN. GOD AND THE SOUL OF MAN

IBN MISKAWAIH

(61)

The soul perceives all existing things whether they are hidden or present, intellectually conceived or sensed. . . . when the soul is in quest of intelligibles and wishes to perceive them, it reverts to its own essence which is separated and pure from matter and casts about as though in search of something near to itself . . . So the soul when it wishes to perceive intelligibles, moves to its perfection and turns its attention to reason (in which all the intelligibles are present) in order that it may obtain all matters of knowledge and become perfect and form complete unity with the intellect. This movement of the soul is called vision and thought.

The soul is a living and enduring substance which is not subject to death and mortality . . . the soul is not identical with life but bestows life on all living things . . . the rational soul never perishes . . . it does not decay with the decay of the body . . . the name for the separation of the soul from the body is death and they call every body dead when the soul is separated from it . . . But we are bewildered and quite at a loss what name to apply to the soul when it becomes separate from the body and what term we are to devise corresponding to our use of "death" in reference to the body—its state of separation cannot be called annihilation, for the soul is immortal.

The movement of the soul is in two directions—one towards its essence and one towards the natural bodily instruments—the soul when it turns towards the upward direction becomes completely lost in its own essence and joining the essence of

THE HUMAN SOUL

the Creator becomes unified with the essence and so unified that from It oneness is introduced into every existence and immortality into the whole universe.

J. W. Sweetman.

AVICENNA (IBN SINĀ)

(62)

The function of the human rational soul is the noblest function of all, for it is itself the noblest of spirits. Its function consists of reflecting upon things of art and meditating upon things of beauty: its gaze being turned towards the higher world, it loves not this lower abode and meaner station. Belonging as it does to the higher side of life and to the primal substances . . . its function is to wait for the revelation of truths, and to reflect with perfect intuition and unclouded wit upon the perception of subtle ideas, reading with the eye of inner vision the tablet of Divine Mystery and opposing with strenuous devices the causes of vain fancy. It is distinguished from other spirits by the possession of perfect reason and far-reaching, all embracing thought; its ambition and striving all through life is to purify the sensual impressions and to perceive the world of intelligible truths.

A. J. Arberry.

(63)

It is prayer which causes the human, rational soul to resemble the heavenly bodies, eternally worshipping Absolute Truth, and seeking the imperishable reward . . . Prayer is the worship of the First Cause, the one Supreme and Mightiest Worshipful; adoration is to know Him Whose Being is Necessary . . . for worship is knowledge, and to be aware of the existence of One Whose Being is necessary and absolute, being seized of His Being with a pure heart, a spirit undefiled and a soul wholly devoted to Him.

The . . . inward part or truth of prayer: is to contemplate God with a pure heart and a spirit abstracted and cleansed of all desires . . . Pure souls, abstracted and free from events in time and space . . . contemplate God intellectually,

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

and behold Him with spiritual, not corporeal vision. It is thus evident that true prayer is spiritual contemplation, and that pure worship is spiritual Divine love.

The true, inward part of prayer . . . is an imploring of Absolute Being to perfect the soul through contemplation of Him, and to complete the worshipper's felicity through the inner knowledge and apprehension of Him. The man in whom the spiritual faculties prevail . . . being ready in the cleanliness of his soul to receive the emanation of God's grace, if he but turns towards God in love and is earnest to worship Him, supernal blessings and heavenly felicity will swiftly flow over him: when the time comes for him to be separated from the body and to depart out of this life, he will immediately contemplate his God, dwelling in His Presence and enjoying the company of those his true kin, the dwellers in the Divine Kingdom.

A. J. Arberry.

(64)

It descended upon thee from out of the regions above,
That exalted, ineffable, glorious, heavenly Dove.
'Twas concealed from the eyes of all those who its nature
would ken,
Yet it wears not a veil, and is ever apparent to men.
Unwilling it sought thee and joined thee, and yet, though it
grieve,
It is like to be still more unwilling the body to leave.

Thick nets detain it, and strong is the cage whereby
It is held from seeking the lofty and spacious sky.
Until, when the hour of its homeward flight draws near,
And 'tis time for it to return to its ampler sphere,
It carols with joy, for the veil is raised, and it spies
Such things as cannot be witnessed by waking eyes.
On a lofty height doth it warble its songs of praise
(For even the lowliest being doth knowledge raise).
And so it returneth, aware of all hidden things
In the universe, while no stain to its garment clings.

THE HUMAN SOUL

Now why from its perch on high was it cast like this
To the lowest Nadir's gloomy and drear abyss ?
Was it God who cast it forth for some purpose wise,
Concealed from the keenest seeker's inquiring eyes ?
Then is its descent a discipline wise but stern,
That the things that it hath not heard it thus may learn.
So 'tis she whom Fate doth plunder, until her star
Setteth at length in a place from its rising far,
Like a gleam of lightning which over the meadows shone,
And, as though it ne'er had been, in a moment is gone.

E. G. Browne.

ABŪ SA'ID B. ABI'L-KHAYR

(65)

Four thousand years before God created these bodies, He created the souls and kept them beside Himself and shed a light upon them. He knew what quantity of light each soul received and He was showing favour to each in proportion to its illumination. The souls remained all that time in the light until they became fully nourished. Those who in this world live in joy and agreement with one another must have been akin to one another in yonder place. Here they love one another and are called the friends of God, and they are brethren who love one another for God's sake . . . Though one be in the East and the other in the West, yet they feel joy and comfort in each other's talk and one who lives in a later generation than the other is instructed and consoled by the words of his friend.

R. A. Nicholson.

BADI'AL-DİN TURKŪ AL-SANJARĪ

(66)

When from her house the soul sets forth to climb
And hastens back to her eternal prime,

The four strings Nature fitted on Life's lute
Disordered break at the rude touch of Time.

R. A. Nicholson.

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ABŪ ḤĀMID AL-GHAZĀLĪ

(67)

Any one who will look into the matter will see that happiness is necessarily linked with the knowledge of God. Each faculty of ours delights in that for which it was created : lust delights in accomplishing desire, anger in taking vengeance, the eye in seeing beautiful objects, and the ear in hearing harmonious sounds. The highest function of the soul of man is the perception of truth ; in this accordingly it finds its special delight. . . .

Seeing, then, that nothing is higher than God, how great must be the delight which springs from the true knowledge of Him ! . . . The true greatness of man lies in his capacity for eternal progress . . . It is necessary for him, at the same time that he is conscious of his superiority as the climax of created things, to learn to know also his helplessness, as that too is one of the keys to the knowledge of God. . . .

From his own creation man comes to know God's existence, from the wonders of his bodily frame God's power and wisdom, and from the ample provision made for his various needs, God's love. In this way the knowledge of oneself becomes a key to the knowledge of God.

Not only are man's attributes a reflection of God's attributes, but the mode of existence of man's soul affords some insight into God's mode of existence. That is to say, both God and the soul are invisible, indivisible, unconfined by space and time, and outside the categories of quantity and quality : nor can the ideas of shape, colour or size attach to them . . .

No one can understand a king but a king ; therefore God has made each of us a king in miniature, so to speak, over a kingdom which is an infinitely reduced copy of His own. . . . The soul, itself unlocated and indivisible, governs the body as God governs the universe.

C. Field.

(68)

The reason of the human soul seeking to return to that upper world is that its origin was from thence and that it is of

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angelic nature. It was sent down into this lower sphere against its will to acquire knowledge and experience . . .

As regards its future existence we have already seen that the human soul is essentially independent of the body . . . Some theologians have supposed that the human soul is annihilated after death and then restored, but this is contrary both to reason and to the Koran. The former shows us that death does not destroy the essential individuality of a man and the Koran says, " Think not that those who are slain in the path of God are dead: nay, they are alive, rejoicing in the presence of their Lord and in the grace bestowed on them."

C. Field.

'UMAR KHAYYĀM

(69)

O soul! from earthly taint when purified,
As spirit free, thou shalt toward heaven ride.

Thy home the empyrean! Shame on thee
Who dost in this clay tenement reside!

In love eternal He created me
And first He taught the lore of charity.

Then from my heart He filed a key that might
Unlock the treasures of Reality.

In some low Inn I'd rather seek Thy face,
Than pray without Thee toward the Niche's place.

O First and Last of all! As Thou dost will,
Burn me in Hell—or save me by Thy grace!

E. H. Rodwell.

(70)

O foolish one! this moulded earth is naught,
This particoloured vault of heaven is naught;

Our sojourn in this seat of life and death
Is but one breath and what is that but naught?

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Thy body's like a tent which for a space
Thy spirit doth with royal presence grace ;
When he departs comes the tent-pitcher Death,
Strikes it, and moves to a new halting place.

My body's life and strength proceed from Thee !
My soul within and spirit are of Thee !

My being is of Thee, and Thou art mine,
And I am Thine, since I am lost in Thee !

E. H. Whinfield.

SANĀ'Ī

(71)

Amidst the gloom I spied an aged man
Of radiant aspect, venerable, calm,
Like the true Moslem in a faithless land.

“ Dark was the night,” I said “ and lo, the Moon !
Dire was the fever, at thy touch it fled.
But who art thou ? Declare thine origin.”

“ I am beyond all substance and all space :
My father God’s own chiefest Minister,
Eternity’s first-fruit, Creation’s cause.

Come, seek a sage who can protect and guide.
To him cling fast, tread down the beast within,
And so deliver both thyself and me.

Fear not this tribulation will consume
Thy strength : a fire it is, and yet a fire
Whence springs the Water of Eternal Life.

The earth-soul dies, the angel soul is born,
Be thou a lowly foot to follow me,
So wilt thou gain the headship spiritual.”

With many a silent word unsyllabled
He gave me heat and light and eyes to see.
Together we set out upon the Way.

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Through flaming pits that house the scorpion-brood
Of Anger, Concupiscence, Pride, we passed.
" This," said my Leader, " is the purge for souls,

The best and wholesomest in all the world,
This poison thou must swallow fearlessly,
'Tis freedom, health and hidden strength and life."

When midst the dark I drained it to the lees,
Night vanished, and I saw glad rays of dawn
Break of a sudden over distant hills,

My eyes were opened to a Paradise
Of azure ports and towers. He bade me look.
" Time's end," he said. " Death cannot touch thee now."

R. A. Nicholson.

NIZĀMĪ

(72)

In the beginning, when this empire did not bear thy name,
and this ruined village was not thy abode,
Thou didst possess the glory of the angelic Phoenix ; thou
flewkest in the zenith of heaven.
Thou the power of the wing of thy love had no bounds, the
eternal way, too, had no limit.
Thou wast weary and camest to this earth ; thou threwest
thy shadow into this clay ;
And again, when thou art tired of this prison, thou wilt tread
on the skirt of the sun.
Though thou mayest leave all behind thee, thou wilt still go
forward.

G. H. Darab.

IBN AL-FĀRID

(73)

By the uprising of those lights that shine
Upon thy countenance, before whose gleam
Resplendent every man is lost to sight ;

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

By that thine attribute of absolute
Perfection, whence the loveliest, shapeliest form
In all creation manifest, derives ;
As by the quality of majesty
That doth my torment unto pleasure turn
And make my very slaying seem most sweet ;
As by the secret of a loveliness
Thy emanation, the sole origin
And perfecting of every elegance
In all the world for ever visible ;
As by a beauty every intellect
Leadeth into captivity my guide
Unto a passion wherein grace most fair
My humbling was, for thy exalting's sake ;
As last by an idea in thee (the which
Transcendeth beauty) through itself I viewed,
Too subtle to be seen by vision's eye—
Thou truly art my heart's desire, the goal
Of my long quest, the far and final end
Of my soul's search, my choice and chosen one.

A. J. Arberry.

IBN AL-'ARABĪ

(74)

O Thou who seest me ever prone to sin,
While Thee I see not willing to upbraid :
How oft I see Him grant His grace's aid
While me He sees not seeking grace to win.

E. G. Browne.

(75)

(Man) received the most noble of forms and his human material was formed with the finest traits that adorn the living creature. God blessed His work with the gift of His own Holy Spirit and endowed man with the powers of intellect and speech ; so that he possessed the attributes of his own Creator. These precious gifts were bestowed upon him, so as to enable him to comprehend the wondrous works of his Divine Originator and to speak His praises . . . Man was

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gifted with a mental capacity, because he possessed a knowledge of his own creation and of the exalted attributes of His Creator. Why it pleased the Almighty to create him, except it be to serve Him, is unknown to him and it does not become him, to seek to penetrate into the mysterious Will of Him who said, 'Be,' and it was.

J. P. Brown.

RŪMĪ

(76)

O Thou who art my soul's comfort in the season of sorrow,
O Thou who art my spirit's treasure in the bitterness of death!
That which the imagination has not conceived, that which the
understanding has not seen,
Visiteth my soul from Thee ; hence in worship I turn toward
Thee.

If a never-ceasing bounty should offer kingdoms,
If a hidden treasure should set before me all that exists,
I would bow down with my soul, I would lay my face in the
dust,
I would say, " Of all these the love of such a One for me ! "

R. A. Nicholson.

(77)

O thou who hast come safely, into this Being's Land ;
Strange thou thyself not knowest how thou didst reach its
Strand—
Straight from the great Shah's Chamber, thou cam'st to
Being's Town,
Sent here to do the Business which he himself had planned.
The Lord gave, then, to prove thee, Capacity to do ;
And as entrusted Capital, thy Sun of Life in hand.
How has the Market's Turmoil confused thy Sense and Brain ;
That thou the Pledge entrusted, can yet not understand ?
O cease to dream and rouse thee ; and do thy Duty well ;
Buy choicest Pearls more wisely, and give not Gold for Sand.
When thou to Home returnest, thou'l see Him sitting there ;
Thy Lord with His Book open, and His own faithful Band.

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He will hold count, and reckon all that Himself did give ;
And ask how thou did'st use it, when under His Command.

W. Hastie.

(78)

Poor copies out of heaven's original,
Pale earthly pictures mouldering to decay,
What care although your beauties break and fall,
When that which gave them life endures for aye ?

O never vex thy heart with idle woes ;
All high discourse enchanting the rapt ear,
All gilded landscapes and brave glistering shows
Fade—perish, but it is not as we fear.

While far away the living fountains ply,
Each petty brook goes brimful to the main.
Since brook nor fountain can forever die,
Thy fears how foolish, thy lament how vain !

What is this fountain, wouldest thou rightly know ?
The Soul whence issue all created things.
Doubtless the rivers shall not cease to flow,
Till silenced are the everlasting springs.

Farewell to sorrow, and with quiet mind
Drink long and deep : let others fondly deem
The channel empty they perchance may find,
Or fathom that unfathomable stream.

The moment thou to this low world wast given,
A ladder stood whereby thou mightst aspire ;
And first thy steps, which upward still have striven,
From mineral mounted to the plant : then higher

To animal existence : next, the Man,
With knowledge, reason, faith. O wondrous goal !
This body, which a crumb of dust began—
How fairly fashioned the consummate whole !

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Yet stay not here thy journey : thou shalt grow
An angel bright and home far off in heaven.
Plod on, plunge last in the great Sea, that so
Thy little drop make oceans seven times seven.

' The Son of God ! ' Nay, leave the word unsaid,
Say, ' God is One, the pure, the single Truth'.
What tho' thy frame be withered, old, and dead,
If the soul save her fresh immortal youth ?

R. A. Nicholson.

(79)

I am the Bird of Paradise ;
And still my Nest is in the Skies.
I am the Spirit Falcon, flown
From Heav'n's Tent, where it open lies.
But in my eager Chase of Prey,
I fell to where new Sense Worlds rise.
I am the Hero of Mount Kaf,¹
Who braves the Death the Weakling flies.
I look on high, until he call
Me home from this far Enterprise.
I look up steadfast, searching keen,
Until my Gaze the Throne descries.
There all secure my Nest bides near
The Tree of Life, where Nothing dies.

W. Hastie.

(80)

First he appeared in the realm inanimate ;
Thence came into the world of plants and lived
The plant-life many a year, nor called to mind
What he had been ; then took the onward way
To animal existence, and once more
Remembers naught of that life vegetive,
Save when he feels himself moved with desire
Towards it in the season of sweet flowers,
As babes that seek the breast and know not why.

¹ The name of the Phoenix.

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Again the wise Creator whom thou knowest
Uplifted him from animality
To Man's estate ; and so from realm to realm
Advancing, he became intelligent,
Cunning and keen of wit, as he is now.
No memory of his past abides with him,
And from his present soul he shall be changed.

Though he is fallen asleep, God will not leave him
In this forgetfulness. Awakened, he
Will laugh to think what troublous dreams he had,
And wonder how his happy state of being
He could forget and not perceive that all
Those pains and sorrows were the effect of sleep
And guile and vain illusion. So this world
Seems lasting, though 'tis but the sleeper's dream ;
Who, when the appointed Day shall dawn, escapes
From dark imaginings that haunted him,
And turns with laughter on his phantom griefs
When he beholds his everlasting home.

R. A. Nicholson.

SULTĀN OWEIS

(81)

From the seat of empire of the soul I one day visited the
habitation of mortals. For a short time I was here a stranger,
but I now return to the home from whence I came.

I was the servant of a Lord, from Whose presence I absented
myself, but I now go before my Master again, shamefaced and
abashed, bearing with me my sword and winding sheet.

That holy bird, my soul, was for some time confined in this
mortal cage, but the cage is now broken and the bird flies
again to its beloved fields.

Adieu ! my friends and companions, my further sojourn in
this world is forbidden, but may you enjoy every blessing and
happiness in that abode from which I am now hastening.

Gore Ouseley.

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HĀFIZ

(82)

Since that sad day when Heaven parted me from Thee,
No one hath ever seen my eyes smile joyously ;
Such sorrow doth this separation cause my heart !
I know it, and Thou know'st it Who created me.

The day of separation drove me far from Thee ;
Thus sever'd from Thy face, I fret impatiently,
If on another's face I gaze, then loyalty
To Thy fair loveliness would blind me instantly.

Thine absence rends my heart with pain : for Thee I yearn !
One sight of Thee !—I die ! no hope can I discern
Of Union blest. Longing, I perish and am gone !
And through desire for Thee to dust I now return !

Return ! mine eye to see Thy beauty longeth sore !
Return ! my grieving heart Thine absence doth deplore !
Return, Beloved ! for, thus parted from Thy face,
From my distracted eyes tears, floods of tears, do pour !

Return ! Return ! Awaiting Thee I die ! I die !

Anonymous.

QĀSIMU'L-ANWĀR

(83)

Ere ever cloistered cell was built, or Somnath's ancient fane
We dwelt with Thee in every phase of life on Being's plane.
'Twixt us all talk of Messenger and Message falls away :
What need of Messenger when Thou dost bide with me for aye ?
Can I oppose the Loved One's will, when ever with the Friend
I hold communion sweet in moods and musings without end ?

E. G. Browne.

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

ABŪ AL-MAWĀHIB AL-SHĀDHILĪ

(84)

You who wander in deserts away from your own consciousness,
Come back to yourself to find all existence summed up in you.
You are the way and reality of perfection,
O one in whom the great consciousness of God dwells.

E. J. Jurji.

JĀMĪ

(85)

This speech from Bāzigha when Joseph heard
From his sweet mouth came forth this living word :
' That Master-craftsman's work am I,' said he ;
' One single drop contents me from His Sea.
' One dot in Heaven from His Pen of Power,
' And from His Beauty's garth this world a flower.
' The Sun's a gleam from out His Wisdom's Light,
' The Earth's a bubble on His Sea of Might.
' Each mundane atom He a Mirror made,
' And His Reflection in each one displayed.
' His Beauty from all faults and flaws is free,
' Hid 'neath the Veil of what no eye can see.
' Discerning eyes in all that's dowered with Grace
' See naught, when well they look, except His Face.
' Beside the Prototype the Shadow's dim ;
' See His Reflection, haste thee unto Him.
' If from the prototype you stand bereft,
' When fades the Shadow, naught to you is left.
' Nor will the shadow long remain with thee ;
' The Rose's colour hath no constancy.
' Look to the Source, if permanence you claim ;
' Go to the Root, if constancy's your aim.
' Can that which is, and soon is not again,
' Make throb the heart, or twinge the vital vein ? '

E. G. Browne.

THE HUMAN SOUL

MISRĪ NIYĀZĪ

(86)

My pathway to a city led the which a plain doth compass fair,
Who enters in sees naught of death, he drinketh of life's water
there.

Goodly its building is to see, its gates are thirty-two, perdie,
'Tis greater than all towns that be, all round is orchard and
parterre.

Its air is fraught with sweet delight, who enters never seeketh
flight :

'Tis not of Paradise I show ; that were no boon to these, I
trow ;

Nay, at the joy and bliss of these all they of Eden wildered
were.

Its name, the City of the Truth ; God set His secret there in
sooth ;

And God He taketh all for guest who are of yonder secret ware.
Friends all, there is no stranger wight, but each to each is
brother dear.

Their selves than life more precious are, their words than
honey sweeter far,

No talk of me and thee doth jar, for all are one in union there.

The Faith of Truth it is their faith, the sea Essential is their
path,

Fulfilled all the desire they have by Fate alway and everywhere.
'Tis of the Soul's Land I have told, have writ with anguish
manifold ;

And every soul descending thence is housed within these bodies
here.

Come, leave not in the clay thy soul, but mounting upward
find thy goal,

Were it befitting man that earth should be his prison-house
for e'er ?

One day thou'l pass full suddenly, and all will weep, but see
thee ne'er.

Yon City of the Truth attain and therein to God's secret gain,
And let the sea of knowledge fill that heart of thine for e'er
and e'er.

E. J. W. Gibb.

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

ANONYMOUS

(87)

What are a thousand worlds compared to Thee ?
And what am I, when heaven's unnumbered host,
 Though multiplied by myriads, and arrayed
In all the glory of sublimest thought,
 Is but an atom in the balance, weighed
Against Thy greatness—is a cypher brought
Against Infinity ? What am I, then ? Nought.

Nought ! but the effluence of Thy light Divine,
Pervading worlds, hath reached my bosom too ;

Yes, in my spirit doth Thy Spirit shine,
As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew.

Nought ! but I live and on hope's pinions fly,
Eager towards Thy presence ; for in Thee

I live, and breathe, and dwell ; aspiring high,
E'en to the throne of Thy Divinity.

I am, O God, and surely Thou must be !

Thou art ! directing, guiding all, Thou art !
Direct my understanding, then to Thee ;

Control my spirit, guide my wandering heart ;
Though but an atom 'midst humanity,

Still I am something fashioned by Thy hand !
I hold a middle rank, 'twixt heaven and earth ;

On the last verge of mortal being stand,
Close to the realm where angels have their birth,
 Just on the boundary of the spirit-land !

The chain of being is complete in me ;
In me is matter's last gradation lost,

 And the next step is spirit—Deity !
I can command the lightning, and am dust !

 A monarch, and a slave ; a worm, a God !
Whence came I here, and how ? so marvellously
 Constructed and conceived, unknown ? This clod
Lives surely through some higher energy ;
For from itself alone it could not be.

THE HUMAN SOUL

Creator ! Yes ! Thy wisdom and Thy Word
Created me ! Thou Source of Life and Good !

Thou Spirit of my spirit and my Lord !
Thy Light, Thy Love, in their bright plenitude
Filled me with an immortal soul, to spring
O'er the abyss of death, and bade it wear
The garments of Eternal Day, and wing
Its heavenly flight beyond this little sphere,
Even to its Source, to Thee, its Author, Thee.

O thought ineffable ! O vision blest !
(Though worthless our conceptions all of Thee,)
Yet shall Thy shadowed image fill our breast,
And waft its homage to the Deity.

God ! thus alone my lowly thoughts can soar,
Thus seek Thy presence. Being wise and good !
'Midst Thy vast works, admire, obey, adore,
And when the tongue is eloquent no more,
The soul shall speak in tears of gratitude.

J. P. Brown.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL

(88)

Make Self strong, and thou wilt endure.

Thou hast being, and art thou afraid of not-being ?
O foolish one, thy understanding is at fault.
Since I am acquainted with the harmony of Life,
I will tell thee what is the secret of Life—
To sink into thyself like the pearl,
Then to emerge from thine inward solitude ;
To collect sparks beneath the ashes,
And become a flame and dazzle men's eyes.

Move round thyself ! Be a circling flame !
What is life but to be freed from moving round others
And to regard thyself as the Holy Temple ?
Beat thy wings and escape from the attractions of Earth ;
Like birds, be safe from falling.

R. A. Nicholson.

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

(89)

O Thou that art as the soul in the body of the universe;
Thou art our soul and thou art ever fleeing from us.
Thou breathest music into Life's lute ;
Life envies Death when death is for thy sake.
Once more bring comfort to our sad hearts,
Once more dwell in our breasts !
Once more let us hear thy call to honour,
Strengthen our weak love.

Thou art of great price and we have naught.

Give us the sleepless eye and the passionate heart
Give us again the nature of quicksilver !

Make this chaff a mountain crested with fire,
Burn with our fire all that is not God !

Take us back to serve thee as of old,
Commit thy cause to them that love thee !
We are travellers : give us devotion as our goal !

R. A. Nicholson.

(90)

O new-fledged Spirit, proudly hovering,
God made thee all delight upon the wing ;
'Tis fleshly passion checks our sluggish flight,
While thou ecstatic unto Heaven dost spring !

What sweet delight, dear Lord, to live, to be !
Each atom's heart pulses with radiant glee ;
The rose-bud, bursting through the rose's stem,
Glowes with the smile of living ecstasy.

Moslems ! I have a word within my heart
More radiant than the soul of Gabriel ;
I keep it hidden from the Sons of Fire,
It is a secret Abraham knew well.

THE HUMAN SOUL

O heart, my heart, unto His street thou'rt gone,
O heart, my heart, thou leavest me alone ;
 Each instant thou createst new desires ;
O heart, hast thou naught other to be done ?

Thou reachest to the bosom of a star ;
Yet of thyself thou art all unaware ;
 Grain-like, upon thyself open an eye,
And thou shalt rise from earth a sapling fair.

If thou wilt take from me the lesson of life,
I'll tell thee a close-guarded mystery :
Having no soul in body, thou must die ;
Thou shalt not die, be there a Soul in thee.

A. J. Arberry.

(91)

Played by Thy Hand, the soul makes melody,
How art Thou in, and yet without the soul ?
With Thee, my flame, I burn, without Thee, die ;
 How farest Thou without me, O my Whole ?

Whom seekest thou ? What fever fills thy mind ?
'Tis He is patent, thou the veil behind :
 Search after Him, and but thyself thou'l see,
Search after Self, and naught but Him thou'l find.

Thou only art in the Creator's 'Be !'
Thou only art the Sign that none may see ;
 Then tread more fearlessly the road of life,
The world's broad plain containeth only thee.

The origins of Selfhood no man knows,
To dawn and eve no fellowship it owes,
I heard this wisdom from the Heavenly Guide :
' Not older than its wave the Ocean flows.'

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

Heart, in the rosebud view Life's mystery :
Truth in Contingent there unveiled is shewn ;
Although it springeth from the shadowed earth,
Its gaze is fixed upon the radiant sun.

Garden and mead are in His radiance dight,
His wine the rose adorns in lustre bright,
None in this world benighted He hath left,
His brand hath kindled in each heart a light.

A. J. Arberry.

IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUL'S ASCENT TO GOD

THE CREATURE IN ITS RELATION TO THE
CREATOR. REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION.
ASCETICISM. THE PURGATIVE LIFE.

AL-ḤASAN AL-BASRĪ

(92)

Beware of this world with all wariness ; for it is like to a snake, smooth to the touch, but its venom is deadly. Turn away from whatsoever delights thee in it, for the little companioning thou wilt have of it ; put off from thee its cares, for that thou hast seen its sudden chance, and knowest for sure that thou shalt be parted from it, endure firmly its hardships, for the ease that shall presently be thine. The more it pleases thee, the more do thou be wary of it ; for the man of the world, whenever he feels secure in any pleasure thereof, the world drives him over into some unpleasantness, and whenever he attains any part of it and squats him down upon it, the world suddenly turns him upside down. And again, beware of this world, for its hopes are lies, its expectations false ; its easefulness is all harshness, muddied its limpidity. And therein thou art in peril : or bliss transient, or sudden calamity, or painful affliction or doom decisive. . . . For this world has neither worth nor weight with God ; so slight it is, it weighs not with God so much as a pebble or a single clod of earth. . . . Moses asked naught of God, the day he took refuge in the shade, save food to eat when he was hungered, and it is said of him in the stories that God revealed to him, ' Moses, when thou seest poverty approaching, say, Welcome to the badge of the righteous ! and when thou seest wealth approaching, say, Lo ! a sin whose punishment has been put on aforesight.' If thou shouldst wish, thou mightest name . . . the Lord of the Spirit and the Word (Jesus), for in his

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affair there is a marvel ; he used to say, ' My daily bread is hunger, my badge is fear, my raiment is wool, my mount is my foot, my lantern at night is the moon, my fire by day is the sun, and my fruit and fragrant herbs are such things as the earth brings forth for the wild beasts and cattle. All the night I have nothing, yet there is none richer than I ! ' And . . . thou mightest name David who . . . ate barley bread in his chamber, and fed his family upon bran meal, but his people upon fine corn ; and when it was night, he clad himself in sackcloth, and chained his hand to his neck, and wept until the dawn ; eating coarse food, and wearing robes of hair. All these hated what God hates, and despised what God despises ; then the righteous thereafter followed in their path and kept close upon their tracks.

A. J. Arberry.

YAHYĀ AL-RĀZĪ

(93)

How can he be abstemious (from worldly enjoyments) who is without the fear of God ? respect that which is not thine and use with great moderation that which is thine . . . Hunger is a spiritual exercise for those who aspire (to the knowledge of God), a trial for those who are turning (unto God), a regular practice for those who abstain (from the enjoyments of this world) and a favour granted to those who have acquired the knowledge (of God's perfection). Solitude is the fit companion for the sincerely devout ; missing the opportunity (of obtaining salvation), is worse than death ; for missing (such a thing) is the being cut away from the truth, whereas death is only the being cut away from the living. Abstinence consists in three things : poverty, solitude and hunger. If a man thinks to deceive God by casting a veil over his sins, God will tear off that veil and expose them to the public.

To him who is going to see a true friend the way never appears long : he who goes to visit his beloved never feels lonely on the road.

Ibn Khallikān (*trans.* M. de Slane).

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NIFFARĪ

(94)

Everything that is on the dust is from the dust: look then at the dust, and thou shalt eliminate that which is from it; and shalt see that which transformed it from one individual in the sight of eyes to another, thus the individuals shall not distract thee. Take to thyself helpers for the wandering of the gaze; and when thy gaze no longer wanders then no helpers are required. The dispensing with helpers shall not be until there is no time; and there shall be no time only when there are no individuals; and there shall be no individuals only when thou seest them not, but seest Me.

D. S. Margoliouth.

IKHWĀN AL-ṢAFĀ

(95)

From the intermediate position of the soul, between the worlds of body and of mind it results that there are open to it three ways or sources of knowledge. Thus by means of the senses the soul is made acquainted with what is beneath it and through logical inference with what is above it and finally with itself by rational consideration or direct intuition. Of these kinds of knowledge the surest and the most deserving of preference is knowledge of one's self. When human knowledge attempts to go farther than this, it proves itself to be limited in many ways. Therefore one must not philosophize straight away about questions like the origin or the eternity of the world, but make his first essays with what is simpler. And only through renunciation of the world, and righteous conduct, does the soul lift itself gradually up to the pure knowledge of the Highest.

The ideal and morally perfect man, should be of East-Persian derivation, Aræbic in faith, of Iraq, i.e. Babylonian, education, a Hebrew in astuteness, a disciple of Christ in conduct, as pious as a Syrian monk, a Greek in the individual

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sciences, an Indian in the interpretation of all mysteries, but lastly and especially a Şüfi in his whole spiritual life.

T. J. de Boer (*trans.* E. R. Jones).

ANSĀRI OF HERAT

(96)

I live only to do Thy will,
My lips move only in praise of Thee,

O Lord, whoever becometh aware of Thee
Casteth out all else other than Thee.

O Lord, give me a heart
That I may pour it out in thanksgiving,
Give me life
That I may spend it
In working for the salvation of the world.

O Lord, give me understanding
That I stray not from the path.
Give me light
To avoid pitfalls.

O Lord, give me eyes
Which see nothing but Thy glory.
Give me a mind
That finds delight in Thy service.
Give me a soul
Drunk in the wine of Thy wisdom.

O Lord, to find Thee is my desire
But to comprehend Thee
Is beyond my strength
Remembering Thee is solace
To my sorrowing heart,
Thoughts of Thee are my Constant Companions
I call upon Thee night and day
The flame of Thy love glows
In the darkness of my night.

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Lord, I, a beggar, ask of Thee
More than what a thousand kings may ask of Thee ;
Each one has something he needs to ask of Thee,
I have come to ask Thee to give me Thyself.

If thou wouldst become a pilgrim on the path
Of love
The first condition is
That thou become as humble as dust
And ashes.

Know that he who desires the things of the World
Is haunted by sorrow.
He who desires Heaven
Is a labourer working for wages.
But, he who desires God,
Is on the path of glory.

Know, that when thou learnest to lose thy self
Thou wilt reach the Beloved.
There is no other secret to be revealed,
And more than this is not known to me.

RAFI' OF MERV

(97)

Soul of the World, to Thee I turn again
With bleeding heart and bring Thee all my pain,
Myself behind, before me need and woe,
And love still waxing—never may it wane !

R. A. Nicholson

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FAKHR AL-DĪN MAS'UDĪ OF MERV

(98)

Deep in the desert of Thy love uncrossed
Wander like me a thousand wretches lost,
Love to their anguish myriad guises lends,
Anguish their souls in myriad pieces rends.
Thy beauty is the medicine of their care,
Union with Thee their hope that kills despair.
Unless with loving hand Thou lead them on,
Their souls will go the way their hearts have gone.
Where Thou art throned above our human fate,
Fraud and religion bear an equal rate ;
Milk of Thy grace the wise old man, world-soiled,
Tastes and becomes again a new-born child.

R. A. Nicholson.

ABŪ HĀMID AL-GHAZĀLĪ

(99)

I applied myself to the study of Sufism. I saw that in order to understand it thoroughly one must combine theory with practice. The aim which the Sufis set before them is as follows : To free the soul from the tyrannical yoke of the passions, to deliver it from its wrong inclinations and evil instincts, in order that in the purified heart there should only remain room for God and for the invocation of His holy name. . . .

There is a considerable difference between knowing renunciation, comprehending its conditions and causes, and practising renunciation and detachment from the things of this world. I saw that Sufism consists in experience rather than in definitions, and that what I was lacking belonged to the domain, not of instruction, but of ecstasy and initiation. . . .

I saw that one can only hope for salvation by devotion and the conquest of one's passions, a procedure which presupposes renunciation and detachment from this world of falsehood in order to turn towards eternity and meditation on God. . . .

Finally, conscious of my weakness and the prostration of my soul, I took refuge in God, as a man at the end of himself

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and without resources . . . and He made easy to me the sacrifice of honours, wealth and family . . . I learnt from a sure source that the Sufis are the true pioneers on the path of God ; that there is nothing more beautiful than their life, nor more praiseworthy than their rule of conduct, nor purer than their morality . . . With the Sufis, repose and movement, exterior or interior, are illumined with the light which proceeds from the Central Radiance of Inspiration. . . . The drawing up of the heart by prayer is the keystone of their method and the last stage is the being lost in God. I say the last stage, with reference to what may be reached by an effort of will ; but, to tell the truth, it is only the first stage in the life of contemplation, the vestibule by which the initiated enter.

I pray God the Omnipotent to place us in the ranks of His chosen, among the number of those whom He directs in the path of safety, in whom He inspires fervour lest they forget Him ; whom He cleanses from all defilement, that nothing may remain in them except Himself ; yea, of those whom He indwells completely, that they may adore none beside Him.

C. Field.

(100)

The visible world is . . . the point of departure up to the world of the Realm Supernal ; and the " Pilgrim's Progress of the Straight Way " is an expression for that upward course, which may also be expressed by " The Faith ", " The Mansions of Right Guidance ". Were there no relation between the two worlds, no inter-connection at all, then all upward progress would be inconceivable from one to the other. Therefore, the divine mercy gave to the World Visible a correspondence with the World of the Realm Supernal, and for this reason there is not a single thing in the world of sense that is not a symbol of something in yonder one.

W. H. T. Gairdner.

(101)

This world is a stage or market-place passed by pilgrims on their way to the next. It is here that they are to provide themselves with provisions for the way ; or, to put it plainly,

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man acquires here, by the use of his bodily senses, some knowledge of the works of God, and, through them, of God Himself, the sight of whom will constitute the future beatitude. It is for acquirement of this knowledge that the spirit of man has descended into this world of water and clay. As long as his senses remain with him he is said to be "in the world"; when they depart, and only his essential attributes remain, he is said to have gone to "the next world". . . The proper nourishment of the soul is the knowledge and love of God, and to be absorbed in love of anything but God is the ruin of the soul.

C. Field.

(102)

Whenever you purify your place, which is your outermost container and then your clothing, which is your nearest covering and then your skin, which is your closest shell, do not be unmindful of your kernel, which is your essence, and that is your heart. So exert yourself on its behalf, cleansing it by repentance and remorse for previous acts, renewing the resolve to abandon such things in the future. So cleanse by repentance your inward part, for that is the place the One you worship observes. . . Let the face of your heart be with the face of your body and know that as a face does not turn towards the direction of the House (*Ka'ba*) except by turning away from everything else, so the heart does not turn towards Allah except by being free of all else besides.

E. E. Calverley.

'UMAR KHAYYĀM

(103)

I am an erring slave, accept Thou me !
My soul is dark, make me Thy light to see !

If heaven be but the wage for service done,
Where are Thy bounty and Thy charity ?

O Thou ! who know'st the secret thoughts of all,
In time of sorest need who aidest all,
Grant me repentance, and accept my plea,
O Thou who dost accept the pleas of all.

E. H. Whinfield.

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(104)

The "Truth" will not be shown to lofty thought,
Nor yet with lavished gold may it be bought ;
Till self be mortified for fifty years,
From words to "states of heart" no soul is brought.

The more I die to self, I live the more,
The more abuse myself, the higher soar :
And, strange ! the more I drink of Being's wine
More sane I grow, and sober than before.

From self-reliance, Lord, deliver me,
Sever from self, and occupy with Thee !
When sober I am bondman to the world,
Make me beside myself, and set me free.

Open the door ! O Warder best and purest,
And guide the way, O Thou of guides the surest !
Directors born of men shall not direct me,
Their counsel comes to naught, but Thou endurest !

E. H. Whinfield.

MAS'UD-I-SA'D-I-SALMĀN

(105)

When I saw with eyes discerning that this World's the Home
of Woe,
And that o'er the best and noblest Death his ccrement doth
throw,
And that Fate, false friend, to cheat me and to rob me did
propose,
Then from off Ambition's sick-bed wholly cured, thank God,
I rose ;
To the drug-shop of Repentance hastened and did there beseech
Tonic medicines to give me strength to practise what I preach.
Therefore now this tongue, which lately sang the praise of
earthly Kings,
Unto God, the King Eternal, humble praise as tribute brings.

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Five yards of wool or cotton are sufficient to contain
A body free from vain desires, a calm untroubled brain.
Long while the praise and service of princes was my care ;
To God I now will offer my service and my prayer !

E. G. Browne.

SANĀ'Ī

(106)

O seeker of the shell of the pearl of 'Unless', lay down clothing and life on the shore of 'Not'; God's existence inclines only towards him who has ceased to exist; non-existence is the necessary provision for the journey. Till in annihilation thou lay aside thy cap thou wilt not set thy face on the road to eternal life; when thou becomest nothing, then runnest towards God; the path of medicancy leads up to Him. If fortune crushes thee down, the most excellent of Creators will restore thee. Rise and have done with false fables; forsake thy ignoble passions and come hither . . .

Recognise that it is God's favour guides thee on the path of duty and religion and His ordinance, not thine own strength. He is the giver of the light of truth and instruction, both Guardian of the world and its Observer, too. He is kinder than mother and father; He it is Who shall guide thee to Paradise; . . . His grace will guide thee to the end. . . .

When He shows His Nature to His creation, into what mirror shall He enter? (i.e. how can He manifest Himself so as to be comprehensible?) The burden of proclaiming the Unity not everyone bears; the desire of proclaiming the Unity not everyone tastes. In every dwelling is God adored; but the Adored cannot be circumscribed by any dwelling. The earthly man, accompanied by unbelief and anthropomorphism, wanders from the road; on the road of truth thou must abandon thy passions; rise, and forsake this vile sensual nature; when thou hast come forth from Abode and Life, then, through God, thou wilt see God.

J. Stephenson.

(107)

The knowledge of the journey to God's road . . . belongs to the man of acuter vision. What, for the man of wisdom

THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUL'S ASCENT TO GOD
and true religion . . . distinguishes that path and points it
out? . . .

And if thou ask of me, I answer plainly and with no un-
certainty, "To turn thy face towards the world of life, to
set thy feet upon outward prosperity, to put out of mind rank
and reputation, to bend one's back double in His service,
to purify ourselves from evil, to strengthen the soul in wisdom."

What is the provision for such a journey? . . . By looking
on the Truth (God) to cut oneself off from the false (i.e. the
things of this world); to leave the abode of those who strive
with words, and to sit before the silent; to journey from the
works of God to His attributes, and from His attributes to the
mansions of the knowledge of Him; then from knowledge to
the world of the secret, then to reach the threshold of poverty;
then when thou art become the friend of poverty, thy Soul
destroys thy impure Self (lower nature); thy Self becomes
Soul (higher nature) inside thee; it becomes ashamed of all
its doings, and casting aside all its possessions is melted on
its path of trial; then when thy Self has been melted in thy
body, thy Soul has step by step accomplished its work;
then God takes away its poverty from it,—when poverty is
no more, God remains. . . .

When shall we be separated from our Selves,—*I* and *thou*
departed and God remaining? the heart arrived at God's
threshold, the Soul saying, Here am I, enter thou? When
by the doorway of Renunciation heart and soul have reached
the dome of a true belief in the Unity.

J. Stephenson.

AFZAL AL-DĪN KHĀQĀNĪ
(108)

When I learnt by heart that alphabet (of abandonment)
whose seal is from non-existence, I forgot the enigma whose
heading was existence (i.e. my teacher gave me such a lesson
that I forgot everything of this world, even my own existence).

When I saw that this school requires a full knowledge of
ignorance, I washed whatever trifles I had learned (before)
with the water of oblivion. Oh, how good is the gaining of
such wisdom that I became ignorant of myself; whoever has

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had such a wise teacher as I have had, he will be made by him ignorant like me. . . . If thorns grow up on the grave of (thy) soul, say, Thanks be to God, thou hast seen thorns outside, behold the garden within it.

My heart has a net-like palace like a bee-hive (whose) outside is simple, and the door, the roof and the interior (part of that hive) are full of gifts. . . . Not like the fish, the inside of which is empty, and the outside has a treasure of the silver coinage, but like the shell, which is naked from outside, and its mine has pearls inside. . . .

Travel outside this world and up into that world (paradise) because the mind is independent of these two (worlds), and think it higher than this and that. What are these two worlds? They are two scales of the balance of divine will, everyone who is its weigher, he is apart from these two scales (i.e. anyone who knows the nature of these two worlds well, he does not care for it at all, but apart from these he is in search of God, Who made them both).

If you are a dervish be kind to the poor, because the disc of the sun gives the cloth of gold (sunlight) to the naked, and itself is seen bare. Be more generous in the time of poverty (than ever), because when the vine-branch becomes like a dervish of autumn, it seems to scatter gold.

M. M. Shuaib.

NIŻĀMĪ OF GANJA

(109)

A philosopher took his way towards a garden,

He saw a station with a painted edifice; he found a royal mansion with ornamented tapestry.

The rose-bud, like the world, tucking up his robe for blood; the poppy not considering the shortness of his life. . . .

The thorn with its shield pierced by his own shaft, the willow trembling for its own life.

The locks of the violet forming a rope for his neck, the eye of the narcissus shedding coins into his lap.

The poppy receiving gems from the turquoise throne of the rose; the poppy lasting for one breath (moment), the rose for one day.

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Their duration is for instant, no more ; none of them are attentive to the end.

When the sage had departed from that bower of paradise, after some months he passed towards the same quarter.

For those flowers and nightingales which he had seen in that garden, he perceived the noise of drunkenness from kites and crows,

The verdure of the garden changed for an exhalation, the nosegay of flowers for daggers of thorns.

The old man looked on that quick departing beauty : he laughed at all the flowers, and wept for himself.

He said : " In the time of display nothing has the property of permanence.

" Whoever has raised his head from a little earth and water, has been drawn in the end to desolation.

" Since there is no abode better than a desolate one, I have no other inclination than to retire in solitude."

When he had received sight by the light of confidence in heaven ; he became acquainted with himself, and found God.

Sir William Jones.

(110)

Listen to this melody and awake ; be entrusted with the mysteries behind the veil.

One cannot find the value of the heart and the dignity of the soul except by discipline.

Entrust the silver of nature to discipline ; produce the gold of nature by discipline,

So that through discipline thou mayst reach a state where thou wilt be drawn from humiliation to glory.

When thou hast broken in the wild horse of nature, the coin of sincerity will be minted in thy name.

That which is contrary to habit, is the leader of the caravan of happiness.

To turn away from lust is sovereignty ; to abandon it altogether is prophetic power.

If for an instant desire is under thy control, then bring the shoes, because paradise is thine,

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Fly for safety to the sanctuary of religion, that thou mayest
be free of care on the day of resurrection.

Truly, the benevolence of the blessed is the protecting armour
of the saints.

G. H. Darab.

(111)

Strive hard to pay back all the debts you owe, that with a
bare-backed steed you may remain,

When of the world's store not a grain you have, go to
what place you please in all the world,

All your possessions you must first throw down before
your crown is lowered from your throne.

It soon may be that many beauteous flowers fall through
the dust of envy to the earth.

I who have like the rose cast arms away, have also from
the thorn of envy fled,

That when my envy wears the darvish-robe, talc may be
scattered on my body's fire.

Thus can one (only) till the time of death complete the
journey through this place of risk.

When I've departed from this ancient inn, say to the sky
(then), Do whate'er you wish.

How long, Nizāmī, will you be in bonds ? Arise and speak
out with uplifted voice.

Give to the Divine Unity your soul, that you may gain
eternal happiness.

C. E. Wilson.

'ATTĀR

(112)

Therefore, yourselves to see as you are seen,
Yourselves must bridge the Gulf you made between
By such a Search and Travel to be gone

Interminable—often all in vain—
And, if successful—no Return again :

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Who then this Travel to Result would bring
Needs both a Lion's Heart, beneath the Wing,
And even more a Spirit purified
Of Worldly Passion, Malice, Lust and Pride :
Yea, ev'n of Worldly Wisdom, which grows dim
And dark, the nearer it approaches *Him*.
Who to the Spirit's Eye alone reveal'd,
By sacrifice of Wisdom's self unseal'd,
Without which none who reach the Place could bear
To look upon the Glory dwelling there.

He that would prosper here must from him strip
The World, and take the Dervish Gown and Scrip :
And as he goes must gather from all sides
Irrelevant Ambitions, Lusts and Prides,
Glory and Gold, and sensual desire,
Whereof to build the Fundamental Pyre
Of Self-Annihilation : . . .
Then, all the Pile completed of the Pelf
Of either World—at last throw on *Thyself*,
And with the Torch of Self-negation fire ;

All of that *Self* burn up that burn up will,
Leaving the Phoenix that no Fire can slay
To spring from its own Ashes kindled—nay,
Itself an inextinguishable Spark
Of Being, *now* beneath Earth-ashes dark,
Transcending these, at last Itself transcends
And with the One Eternal Essence blends.

E. Fitzgerald.

RŪMĪ

(113)

All Unbelief is Midnight, but Faith the Night-Lamp's glow ;
Then see that no Thief cometh to steal thy Lamp when low,
Our Hope is for the Sunlight, from which the Lamp did shine;
The Light from which it kindles, still feeds its flame below,
But when the Sun hath risen, both Night and Lamp go out ;
And Unbelief and Faith then, the higher Vision know,

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O Night! Why art thou dreaming? O Lamp! Why flickerest so?
The swift Sun-horses panting, from East their fire-foam throw,
'Tis Night still in the shadow; the village Lamp burns dim;
But in Dawn's Splendour towering, the Peaks Heaven's Glory
show.

W. Hastie.

(114)

You name His name; go, seek the reality named by it!
Look for the moon in heaven, not in the water!
If you desire to rise above mere names and letters,
Make yourself free from self at one stroke!
Like a sword be without trace of soft iron;
Like a steel mirror, scour off all rust with contrition;
Make yourself pure from all attributes of self,
That you may see your own pure bright essence!

E. H. Whinfield.

(115)

Awake! 'Tis Day! Rise up, O Youthful Mussulman!
Pack quick thy Goods and Baggage, and catch the Caravan,
O List! I hear it coming, 'twill sweep past you while you
sleep;
Hark! Tinkling Bells are calling to come, while come you can.
When once the Desert Sand-storm has over the Foot-prints
blown,

You them will find no longer, however close you scan.
Up! Brace yourself for Action, as a Man all prompt and bold;
And waste not Life fond, dreaming, in idlesse, pining, wan.
Think of your noble Forbears, the gallant Youth of old;
Of Rustum, bravest Hero: of Sal, the Pehlevan.
Be, too, of Right the Champion, Knight of the spotless Sun!
Fall not a Prey to Darkness, o'erthrown by Ahriman.
When once in struggle valiant, the earthly Soul is slain,
The Heavenly Soul bears proudly Life's Banner in the Van.
When thou thyself hast conquered, and triumphed in the Fight;
A diamond Ring thou'l ever shine, in our Lord Shah's Divan.

W. Hastie.

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(116)

O Thou who art my soul's comfort in the season of sorrow,
O Thou who art my spirit's treasure in the bitterness of death;
That which the imagination hath not conceived, that which
the understanding hath not seen,
Visiteth my soul from Thee, hence in worship I turn towards
Thee,

If a never-ceasing bounty should offer kingdoms,
If a hidden treasure should set before me all that exists,
I would bend down with my soul, I would lay my face in the
dust,
I would say, " Of all these the love of such an One for me ! "

Come, come, for you will not find another Friend like Me ;
Where indeed is a Beloved like Me in all the world ?
Come, come, and do not spend your life in wandering to and fro,
Since there is no market elsewhere for your money.
You are a dry valley and I as the rain
You are a ruined city and I as the architect.
Except My service, which is joy's sunrise,
Man never has felt and never will feel an impression of joy.

R. A. Nicholson.

(117)

If thou hast ears to hear,
Receive my message clear :
With Him to link thy heart,
Thou must from self depart.

Be silent, where the sight
Perceive the vision bright :
What speech must else declare
Is all beholding there.

Except a man himself deny,
To self he shall not wholly die,
Nor realize the mystery
Of unity :

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

Which is not God incarnated,
But being unto selfhood dead ;
Else were vain boasting to pursue
And all untrue,

Since thou art not a slave, proclaim
Thyselv a king ;
Whither thou wouldst ambition aim,
There let it wing,

When from thyself thou art wholly free,
And all beside,
Go, beat the Drum of Deity,
Unselfed abide.

A. J. Arberry.

SA'DĪ

(118)

Arise, and let us keep the vow of fidelity to "our trust" (and) atone for our past sins by means of service (to God). It was an act of folly on our part to humble ourselves before men : henceforth let us practise humility at the door of the Divine Majesty.

The door of the Hospital of penitence is not yet closed, so that we may (still) cure the disease of sin by reparation.

We turned away from God, towards all people, but it was all in vain : it would be better to turn to God from everyone else.

SA'DĪ

(118)

Let us put aside lust and desire and the heart's vain passions : let us bend double the back of devotion with a single heart, It is a pity that the hearts of men should get into the power of the Devil, how long shall we surrender the home of the Friend to the enemy ?

Since (even) the exalted rank of the angels is below our position, why should we yield so humbly to Satan's power ?

THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUL'S ASCENT TO GOD

Base silver (hypocrisy) only brings shame and an evil reputation : arise, O Sage ! so that we may seek the elixir (of Truth).

O Sa'di ! the rich journey (far afield) for purposes of trade, while we, like beggars, offer prayers at the door of the Beneficent One,

O God ! lends us Thine aid, for favours and forgiveness are befitting to Thee, while our deeds are worthy of us.

Lucas White King.

(119)

Each day the wind carries off a rose from the garden, and wounds the poor nightingale's heart.

He who is accustomed to the society of contemporaries ought to exercise forbearance over the tyranny of Time.

For this falcon of Death carries off in his talons, like a pigeon, everyone that is born.

O friend ! set not your affections on this present world : undisturbed security is impossible here.

No edifice has been erected on the earth that has not sooner or later undergone a change.

The deceitful world is (really) foul of aspect (though) it impudently displays a (seeming) beauty every morning.

Yesterday the garden and the pleasure ground and tulip bed were full of delight, and a clamour arose in the orchard through the warbling of birds,

While to-day the mimosa thorns have drawn their swords, and you might even say that a rose never bloomed in this garden.

This world is but a bridge that leads to Eternity and people of discernment do not make their home on a bridge.

Lucas White King.

(120)

The pain of love is pleasanter than health : the kingdom of poverty is more attractive than that of wealth.

Wisdom is regarded as the best of created things, but gnostics assert that intoxication (Divine ecstasy) is better.

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

Egoism arises from (the possession of) wealth and position, but renunciation of self is superior to selfhood.

Since the heavy-laden move with difficulty, it is better to be unencumbered and active (such clogs of Not-Being as evil passions and selfish lusts hinder the Mystic's upward progress and must be discarded).

Lucas White King.

(121)

Brother, this world is no man's part for aye :
Upon the world's Creator be thy stay :
Reliance sure is not on earth to gain—
Many like thee hath it raised up, and slain.
What care, when spirit forth from flesh doth rise,
Whether on throne or dust the body dies ?

A. J. Arberry.

NAFASĪ

(122)

Renunciation is of two kinds, external and internal. The former is the renunciation of worldly wealth ; the latter, the renunciation of worldly desires. Everything that hinders or veils the traveller's path must be renounced, whether it relate to this world or the next. Wealth and dignity are great hindrances ; but too much praying and fasting are often hindrances too. The one is a shroud of darkness, the other a veil of light. The traveller must renounce idolatry, if he desire to reach the Goal, and everything that bars his progress is an idol. All men have some idol which they worship ; with one it is wealth and dignity, with another overmuch prayer and fasting. If a man sit always upon his prayer-carpet, his prayer-carpet becomes his idol. . . .

Renunciation is the practice of those who know God and the characteristic mark of the wise . . . Renunciation and the knowledge of God are like a tree ; the knowledge of God is the root, renunciation the branches, and all good principles and qualities are the fruit.

E. H. Palmer.

THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUL'S ASCENT TO GOD

SHABISTARI

(123)

You are that plurality which becomes very Unity
You are that Unity which becomes very plurality.
A man may know this mystery when he passes forth
From the part and travels up to the whole.
Of what sort is this traveller, who is this wayfarer ?
Of whom shall I say that he is the perfect man ?
Again you ask " Who is the traveller on the road ? "
It is he who is acquainted with his own origin.
He is a traveller who passes on with haste,
And becomes pure from self as fire from smoke,
Know his journey is a progress of revelation from the contingent
To the necessary, leading away from darkness and defect.
He travels back his first journey, stage after stage,
Till he attains the grade of the perfect man.

• • • • •
Who then is he who attains to the secret of unity ?
Who is the understanding one that is a knower ?
That man attains to the secret of unity
Who is not detained at the stages on the road,
But the knower is he that knows Very Being.
He that witnesses Absolute Being.
He recognises no being but Very Being,
And being such as his own he gambles clean away.
Your being is naught but thorns and weeds,
Cast it all clean away from you.
Go sweep out the chamber of your heart,
Make it ready to be the dwelling-place of the Beloved,
When you depart out, He will enter in,
In you, void of yourself, will He display His beauty.

E. H. Whinfield.

HĀFIΖ

(124)

Grant me the joy of Union, if it be Thy Will ;
Or anguish sore, through severance, if it be Thy Will ;

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

How were it, Lord, if Thou shouldst set me free
From error's grasp and cause me truth to see ?

Guebres by scores Thou makest Musulmans,
Why, then, not make a Musulman of me ?

My lust for this world and the next efface,
Grant me the crown of poverty, and grace

To be partaker in Thy mysteries,
From paths that lead not towards Thee turn my face.

E. H. Whinfield.

(130)

From him who is chosen, whom God above
Deems worthy to rest in the shade of His love,
All earthly means in this world are withdrawn :
No mortal may hold His elected in pawn.
God draws him away to Himself alone,
And to none but Him may his love be shown.
To the will of another he may not bend,
But on God alone may his hope depend,
No prayer to others must he prefer
But be God's own servant and prisoner.

R. T. H. Griffith.

(131)

Yesterday this universe neither existed nor appeared to exist, while to-day it appears to exist, but has no real existence : it is a mere semblance, and to-morrow nothing thereof will be seen. What does it profit thee to allow thyself to be guided by vain passions and desires ? Why dost thou place reliance on these transitory objects that glitter with false lustre ? Turn thy heart away from all of them, and firmly attach it to God. Break loose from all these, and cleave closely to Him. It is only He who always has been and always will continue to be. The countenance of His eternity is never scarred by the thorn of contingency.

The fleeting phantoms you admire to-day
Will soon at Heaven's behest be swept away.

O give your heart to Him who never fails,
Who's ever with you and will ever stay.

THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUL'S ASCENT TO GOD

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E. H. Whinfield.

HĀFIZ

(124)

Grant me the joy of Union, if it be Thy Will ;
Or anguish sore, through severance, if it be Thy Will ;

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

I do not say to Thee, 'What wilt Thou give to me ?'
For grant whatever is according to Thy Will.

Anonymous.

MAGHRIBI

(125)

Ask not the road to the College or the customs of the
Monastery ;
Pass by road and custom ; ask not about way and road.
Adopt the path of (religious) Poverty and Annihilation and
be happy ;
Look not behind thee, and ask not save of what lies before.
When thou steppest forth from the narrow cell of the body
Ask not save of the Holy Precincts and of the King.
Ask about the delights of Poverty and Annihilation from those
who have tasted them ;
Ask not of him who is the slave of wealth and rank.

E. G. Browne.

PIR JAMĀL

(126)

Do not wish ill to anyone, O man of good nature,
Whether they be people of the cell (Christian ascetics) or of
the synagogue,
What a bad place is a bad thought ! Hell springs from it.
Know that the joys of Paradise are from good thoughts alone.

Thou art thine own barrier (prison). Arise quickly and depart !
That is to say, death to self (*fanā*) is the life (*baqā*) of the
dervish,
If dervishhood consisted in (garments of) wool and felt
Goats and sheep would be the leaders of the Sūfis.

R. A. Nicholson.

ABŪ AL-MAWĀHIB AL-SHĀDHILĪ

(127)

The purity of hearts is the key of the unseen. Purify you
heart, for it is the house of your Lord. The heart is the mirror

THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUL'S ASCENT TO GOD

of manifestation : therefore seek the polishing value of consecration (*takhallī*). The heart is the throne of your Lord, the Divine consciousness, the observed pocket. Read the tablet of your heart, your ' preserved tablet ', you the beloved, the observed one, and it shall reveal your secrets to you . . . Knowledge of your sanctified self is the door to the presence of sovereignty.

E. J. Jurji.

JĀMĪ

(128)

In long devotion to forms that cheat
Thou hast suffered the days of thy life to fleet :
But outward forms are still passing away,
Changing their fashion from day to day.
Tread not ever on stones that are rough to thy feet ;
Nor shift from one branch to another thy seat.
Seek high o'er the sphere of the world thy rest ;
In the world of reality make thee a nest.
If Truth be thine object, form-worshippers shun ;
For form is manifold, Truth is one.
In number trouble and error lie.
To Unity then for sure refuge fly.
If the might of the foeman oppress thee sore,
Fly to the fortress and fear no more.

R. T. H. Griffith.

(129)

Make my heart pure, my soul from error free,
Make tears and sighs my daily lot to be,

And lead me on Thy road away from self,
That lost to self I may draw near to Thee !

Set enmity between the world and me,
Make me averse from worldly company :

From other objects turn away my heart,
So that it be engrossed with love to Thee.

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

How were it, Lord, if Thou shouldst set me free
From error's grasp and cause me truth to see ?

Guebres by scores Thou makest Musulmans,
Why, then, not make a Musulman of me ?

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THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUL'S ASCENT TO GOD

When to fair idols' shrines I did repair,
I vexed my heart with griefs encountered there ;
Now earthly beauty has lost all its charm,
Eternal beauty is my only care.

Things that abide not to eternity
Expose thee to misfortune's battery ;
In *this* life, then, sever thyself from all
From which thy death is bound to sever thee.

Perchance with wealth and sons endowed thou art.
Yet with all these ere long thou'l have to part.

Thrice happy he who gives his heart to ONE,
And sets affection on the men of heart.

E. H. Whinfield.

(132)

What is the Fire ? Ascetic Discipline,
That burns away the animal alloy,
Till all the dross of matter be consumed,
And the essential Soul, its raiment clean
Of mortal taint, be left. . . .

That Divine Perfection,
Where with the soul inspir'd and all array'd
Its intellectual light is royal blest,
And mounts the throne and wears the crown, and reigns
Lord of the empire of Humanity.

Edward FitzGerald.

FURŪGHĪ

(133)

When didst thou depart from the heart that I should crave
for Thee ?

When wert thou hidden that I should find Thee ?
Thou hast not disappeared that I should seek Thy presence ;
Thou hast not become hidden that I should make Thee
apparent.

Thou hast come forth with a hundred thousand effulgences
That I may contemplate Thee with a hundred thousand eyes.

E. G. Browne.

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

MUHAMMAD IQBAL

(134)

The soul cares only for itself, like the camel :
It is self-conceited, self-governed and self-willed.
Be a man, get its halter into thy hand,
That thou mayest become a pearl albeit thou art a potter's
vessel.
He that does not command himself
Becomes a receiver of commands from others.

So long as thou hold'st the staff of ' There is no God but He '.
One to whom God is as the soul in his body,
His neck is not bowed before vanity.
Fear finds no way into his bosom,
His heart is afraid of none but Allah.

He withdraws his gaze from all except God.

R. A. Nicholson.

V

THE MYSTIC PATH

THE SERVANT IN RELATION TO HIS LORD. THE ACTIVE LIFE OF VIRTUE. THE SOLITARY LIFE AND RECOLLECTION. THE ILLUMINATIVE LIFE

AL-NŪRĪ

(135)

I had supposed that, having passed away
 From self in concentration, I should blaze
 A path to Thee: but ah! no creature may
 Draw nigh Thee, save on Thy appointed ways.
 I cannot live, Lord, without Thee;
 Thy hand is everywhere: I may not flee.

Some have desired through hope to come to Thee,
 And Thou hast wrought in them their high design:
 Lo, I have severed every thought from me,
 And died to selfhood, that I might be Thine.
 How long, my heart's Beloved? I am spent:
 I can no more endure this banishment.

A. J. Arberry.

IBN MISKAWAH

(136)

The person who sees existing things and thinks deeply on them and by correct progress advances from the lowest to the highest obtains knowledge of his Lord in such a way that he has no doubt or questioning. And it is possible that he may also see God in the way that it is possible for the creature to see God.

After this when a man turns his gaze from what is above to what is below, then he discovers that God Most High who is

THE ŞÜFİ PATH OF LOVE

First and One and Simple, encompasses and embraces everything else and ordains and plans all beside, just as the intellect encompasses the soul, and the soul the nature and the nature bodies, although it has no need of the subordination or encompassing of any one of them, but all these are dependent on the Holy, Glorious and Mighty Essence.

J. W. Sweetman.

ABŪ SA'ID B. ABI'L-KHAYR

(137)

He was asked, "When shall a man be freed from his wants?" "When God shall free him," he replied; "this is not effected by a man's exertion, but by the grace and help of God. First of all, He brings forth in him the desire to attain this goal. Then He opens to him the gate of repentance. Then he throws him into self-mortification, so that he continues to strive and, for a while, to pride himself upon his efforts, thinking that he is advancing or achieving something; but afterwards he falls into despair and feels no joy. Then he knows that his work is not pure, but tainted, he repents of the acts of devotion which he had thought to be his own, and perceives that they were done by God's grace and help, and that he was guilty of polytheism in attributing them to his own exertion. When this becomes manifest, a feeling of joy enters his heart. Then God opens to him the gate of certainty, so that for a time he takes anything from anyone and accepts contumely and endures abasement, and knows for certain by Whom it is brought to pass, and doubt concerning this is removed from his heart. Then God opens to him the gate of love, and here too egoism shows itself for a time and he is exposed to blame, which means that in his love of God he meets fearlessly whatever may befall him and reck not of reproach; but still he thinks 'I love' and finds no rest until he perceives that it is God who loves him and keeps him in the state of loving, and that this is the result of divine love and grace, not of his own endeavour. Then God opens to him the gate of unity and causes him to know that all action depends on God Almighty. Hereupon he perceives that all is He, and all is by Him, and all is His; that He has laid this

THE MYSTIC PATH

self-conceit upon His creatures in order to prove them, and that He in His omnipotence ordains that they shall hold this false belief, because omnipotence is His attribute, so that when they regard His attributes they shall know that He is the Lord. What formerly was hearsay now becomes known to him intuitively as he contemplates the works of God. Then he entirely recognises that he has not the right to say 'I' or 'mine'. At this stage he beholds his helplessness ; desires fall away from him and he becomes free and calm. He wishes that which God wishes ; his own wishes are gone, he is emancipated from his wants, and has gained peace and joy in both worlds.

R. A. Nicholson.

(138)

Let no one of Thy boundless Grace despair ;
Thine own elect shall ever upward fare :
The mote, if once illumined by The Sun,
The brightness of a thousand suns shall share.

E. G. Browne.

'UMAR KHAYYĀM

(139)

Hearts with the light of love illumined well,
Whether in mosque or synagogue they dwell,
Have their names written in the book of love,
Unvexed by hopes of heaven or fear of hell.

E. H. Whinfield.

AHMAD AL-GHAZĀLĪ

(140)

Audition detaches one from external things and inclines one to accept the hidden lights and secrets. Then as often as one's ecstasy (*wajd*) increases in audition, one's travelling and flying in the world of spirits increases. And when one's increase is abundant, the heart is made fine, and one receives some of the marks of the outpouring and revelations of Allah (Exalted is He !) : then one attains the station of union (*wuṣūl*) without a new religious experience (*riyāda*). . . .

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

When the spirit follows the body in movement and the body follows the spirit in presence, light and joy, it is detached from suppositions and imaginations and the realities which are combined in the spirit penetrate the bodily powers. Then when the body is drawn to the station of the spirit the veil is removed, and it sees those realities and truths all at once. This is the station of the perfection of actual vision which does not arise by many religious exercises.

So as often as quiescence becomes strong in the heart, it is detached from everything but Allah (Exalted is He !) ecstasy appears in it, and it is drawn to the Unique Presence. Then by the sight of the inner nature it sees the divine worlds and comprehends the divine (*rabbāniya*) secrets which intellects and understandings cannot grasp. . . . sometimes a man gets from audition perfections such as are not obtained from persistence in many acts of devotion. . . .

The inner nature of audition is like poison which causes one to die to the attachments of things which are other than Allah and causes one to reach the unseen station . . . the Essential, divine co-existence (*ma'īya*) . . . he who engages in audition . . . gets support from the unseen by his spiritual nature, and pours forth on everything else life and knowledge which the word *mā* (water) indicates.

So he who engages in audition rises to the high stations and the divine favours which one cannot attain to by a thousand efforts and the most perfect religious exercises.

J. Robson.

(141)

God rescues (the people of revelations and secrets) . . . and the reception of the divine instructions (*ta'rīfāt*) takes place without an intermediary . . . Their minds are perfect with wisdom (*hikma*) and gnosis (*ma'rifa*) ; their hearts are perfect with the states (*ahwāl*), the tastes (*adhwāq*) and the ecstasies (*nawājīd*) ; and their souls are perfect with good deeds and pure characters to interpret every existing thing according to the purpose of Allah (Exalted is He !). Then He sends them back from the truth to the creatures (*khalq*) seeking to transfer to others by means of them the marks of the divine attributes which pertain to life and knowledge. So when they leave the

THE MYSTIC PATH

divine presence in mind and soul and are attached to other than Allah (Exalted is He !), on account of seeing the marks of His actions and the perfecting of the ranks of His noumena (*ma'qūlāt*), no evil touches them by this accidental attachment, i.e. distance and being veiled from the Unique Presence, since they are with Allah in their inner being and spirit, and with the creatures in their perception and soul ; " and they will not grieve " on account of the departure of the stages, stations and states which they possess.

J. Robson.

NIZĀMĪ OF GANJA

(142)

While yet a youth, I quitted not Thy bosom, nor did I leave Thy threshold to visit the door of mortal,

But Thou hast sent everyone to my door : I did not solicit the honour, but Thou didst of Thyself grant it.

Now that I have grown old in Thy temple, O Lord, whatever is to befall me, I pray Thee, let go not my hand.

Gore Ouseley.

'ATTĀR

(143)

When first the lover shyly strode
Upon love's everlasting road,
In prone humility he fell
A shadow upon earth to dwell.

And when a little space was past
No shadow more at all he cast,
For in a far and lofty place
The sun conceals his radiant face.

If thou wouldest know love's mystery,
Leave faith and infidelity ;
When love is come, he banisheth
Both infidelity and faith.

THE ŞÜFİ PATH OF LOVE

It is a task both hard and high
This mystic Way to travel by
And where a thousand travellers be
But one alone the Path can see.

How knowest thou who travelleth there ?
For on this Road the wayfarer
When he doth take the first of steps
High o'er the seventh heaven leaps.

Whoe'er the pearl of Meaning true
Within this Ocean doth pursue,
Here and beyond in noble pride
He shall eternally abide.

'Aṭṭār who on this road doth fare
Hath come unto a station, where
Body and soul he dwells above
And hath transcended Hate and Love.

A. J. Arberry.

(144)

Whoever leaves this world behind him passes away from mortality, and when he has passed away from mortality, he attains to immortality. If thou dost desire to reach this abode of immortality, and to attain to this exalted station, divest thyself first of self, then summon unto thyself a winged steed out of nothingness, to bear thee aloft. Clothe thyself with the garment of nothingness and drink the cup of self-annihilation. Cover thy breast with a nothingness, and draw over thy head the robe of non-existence. Set thy foot in the stirrup of complete renunciation and, looking straight before thee, ride the steed of not-being to the place where nothing is. Thou wilt be lost again and again, yet go on thy way in tranquillity, until at last thou shalt reach the world where thou art lost altogether to Self.

Margaret Smith.

THE MYSTIC PATH

RŪMĪ

(145)

But there are planets brighter far
Than those which meet the mortal eye,
Surpassing each material star,
Revolving in a purer sky ;
Bright stars, that wax not pale nor dim,
That shine with God's own glorious light,
That dwell for evermore with Him—
The fixed stars of the Infinite.
Before their pure and holy light
The powers of sin and darkness fly—
As when across the starless night,
To guard the portals of the sky
Is hurled the meteoric brand

But he upon whose soul they shine,
Though meek and lowly he appear,
Shall conquer in the power divine,
His light is ever bright and clear ;
God holds him safe from harm and fear
Within the hollow of His hand.
Their light is like a rich largess
God scattereth from the skies above,
And eager mortals forward press
To catch it in the lap of love.

E. H. Palmer.

(146)

They deem it crime to flee from Destiny,
For Destiny, to them brings only sweetness.
Welcome is all that ever can befall them
For were it fire it turns to living waters,
The poison melts to sugar on their lip ;
The mire they tread is lustrous diamond,
And weal and woe alike, whatever comes,
They and their kingdom lie in God's Divineness,
To pray ' O Lord, turn back this trouble from me,'
They count an insult to the hand that sent it ;

THE SŪFĪ PATH OF LOVE

Faithful they are, but not for Paradise ;
God's will the only crowning of their faith :
And not for seething hell flee they from sin,
But that their will must serve the Will Divine,
It is not struggle, 'tis not discipline,
Wins them a will so restless and so blest ;—
It is that God from His heart-fountain ever
Fills up their jubilant souls.

R. A. Vaughan.

'IRĀQĪ

(147)

Make thy heart

a mirror ; gaze therein : yet do not keep
the glass obscured : not every shining thing
serves for a mirror. Polish off the rust
that stains thy inward mirror and so come
into the palace of the King of Beauty.
Glass-like, let all thy body be an eye,
and thy soul's vision shall be radiant :
turn back on self and haply thou shalt be
as in a mirror face to face with Him.

. . . The sun

is as the Friend's light, and the lover's heart
is like the gleaming moon's celestial disk

. . . so light infinite

floods down upon the moon, being near the sun.

. . . So, if thou wouldest comprehend

the mystery of lovers, soar beyond

the summits of imagination ; free

the brain, from barren labours ; rise, and strike

the bargain of ' I reck not '.

A. J. Arberry.

SA'DĪ

(148)

The love of devout (Mystics) is not inspired by any earthly
passion : the journey of the poor in spirit (spiritual lovers) is
not undertaken from any wrong motive.

THE MYSTIC PATH

Gnostics enjoy the perpetual vision (of the Divine Beauty), whereas others are allowed one look only, and a second is not permitted.

It is natural for plants to be revived by the morning breeze, whereas minerals and dead bodies are not susceptible to the Zephyr's influence. (The meaning is that only those whose hearts are alive to the meaning of spiritual Love, can be quickened by the breath of Divine Inspiration.)

If you should have the felicity of dying with a live heart, you will pass into a (new) life, in which there will be no more death.

Look towards One, who will wipe away the darkness from your existence and not towards one (God forbid it) who is devoid of purity (= the Inner light).

Lucas White King.

SA'DĪ

(149)

The moth cannot bear to be far from the light, but if she tries to approach it, it consumes her.

Everyone is engrossed with some attachment (or other, but) the spiritually minded (Mystics) are devoted to the love of the Beloved.

At the time when the Day of Resurrection happens the Court of Account will be held, and the Royal mandate presented.

We shall live again through the mention of the Beloved's (name) : the rest will be brought to life by the blast of the trumpet.

We are intoxicated by the pure wine of (spiritual) love : we do not thirst for (the fountains of Paradise) *Salsabil* and *Kāfur*.

I, as well as the heart-sick wakeful lover, can appreciate the prolongation of the long, dark night.

To outward appearance Thou art not near us, but Thou art never remote from our mind's eye.

I cannot traverse the road that leads away from Thee : ensnarement in Thy noose is better than separation.

THE SŪFI PATH OF LOVE

O Sa'dī! since you desire the honey, you must endure the bee.

Lucas White King.

(150)

Last night in the desert of seclusion I boasted of my solitary state, (and) pitched my tent above those esteemed for their virtue (= mystics).

(But) when I gloried in the Oneness in the street of Unity, the duality of the devotees of the hermitage was torn to shreds.

So deeply did I search the mysteries of the Universe that even Universal Reason was confounded.

Reason was (at first) my guide, (but) when Love came to me, I struck the back of my hand on the mouth of (rejected) frenzied Reason.

I had tied so many knots on the line of self-conceit and self-will, that like a thread, I became twisted (suffered anguish) in the hands of the Tailor (of Creation).

I put on the door of my heart the lock of patience against my desires, so that I might not have to wander round other people's doors like a key.

If anyone feels the desire for wisdom, let him not speak; for, I have kept silence, since I inclined towards wisdom.

Like the Mystic I cherished in my bosom the peak of spiritual knowledge, so that by reason of (possessing) that jewel, I despised the gems of the ocean.

After this I will only move straight forward by (divine) rule (= methodically) like the sun, though, formerly, I used to wander wantonly like the heavenly sphere.

I obliterated Sa'dī's sayings (= poetry) from the record of existence before I approached the presence of the peerless Master.

Lucas White King.

(151)

The sun is flashing out its beams from the Eastern horizon, (so) O Cup-bearer, hand me a cup of last night's wine (of Divine love).

THE MYSTIC PATH

Steal away for a short space my Reason (for) how long (shall we bear) the tyranny of Wisdom ? Take away for a little while my sense, (for) how long must we worry over (the vicissitudes) of Fortune ?

If the stones of Calamity should rain, make the crown of my head a shield against them, and if the arrows of reproach should assail me, let my life be their target,

How can the Mystic seek the pure wine (of Divine Love) ?
(For) the phoenix cannot be contained in the sparrow's nest.

If you are offered the wine (of Divine Love) even in exchange for your life, then take it, for in the opinion of the wise, the tavern's dust is sweeter than the Water of Life.

Sa'dī will wander in the desert (of Love) (i.e. pass his life in the selfless contemplation of the Divine Beauty).

Lucas White King.

NAFASĪ

(152)

Devotion is the prosecution of the journey and that in two ways, to God and in God. The first, the Sūfīs say, has a limit; the second is boundless; the journey to God is completed when the Traveller has attained to the knowledge of God; and then commences the journey in God, which has for its object the knowledge of the Nature and Attributes of God; a task which they confess is not to be accomplished in so short a space as the lifetime of a man,

The knowledge wisest men have shared
Of Thy great power and Thee
Is less, when with Thyself compared,
Than one drop in a sea.

E. H. Palmer.

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AWHADĪ OF MARĀGHĀ

(153)

That Friend adopt as friend : all else forsake.
With stir and movement fill thy heart with pain :
The soul in rest and quiet strength doth gain.
That HE may clasp thee tight in His embrace.

• • •
If thou canst do what He enjoins on thee
He'll do what thou dost ask assuredly.
He's kin enough : all else forsake forthwith :
When wilt thou free thyself from kin and kith ?

• • •
To be united is not as to see :
In this my speech is no hypocrisy.
Were sight and union one in fact and deed
The eye on looking at the thorn would bleed.
A cup He gives thee : spill not, drink it up !
Hold fast when I bestow another cup !
One is the Master's Face : pluralities
From mirror and from Mirror-holder rise.
One the King's portrait and the coining-die :
Numbers in gold and silver coinage lie.
One sap supplies the flower which doth adorn
The rose-bush, and the sharp and cruel thorn.
Orange and fire alike their hue derive
From that life-giving sun whereon they thrive.
A thousand circles issue from the point
What time the compass doth enlarge its joint.
The world entire reveals His Vision bright :
Seek it, O ye who are endowed with sight :
All things His praises hymn in voices still,
Sand in the plain and rocks upon the hill.

E. G. Browne.

THE MYSTIC PATH

HĀFIZ

(154)

Learn from yon orient shell to love thy foe,
And store with pearls the hand, that brings thee woe ;
Free, like yon rock, from base vindictive pride,
Imblaze with gems the wrist, that rends thy side :
Mark, where yon tree rewards the stony show'r
With fruit nectareous, or the balmy flower ;
All nature calls aloud : " Shall man do less
Than heal the smiter, and the railer bless ? "

Sir William Jones.

QĀSIMU'L-ANWĀR

(155)

From mention of all ' others ' let thy tongue be cleansed and freed,
Since those in whom The Spirit works of ' others ' take no heed.
Sober to tread the mystic Path no obligation's thine :
Each atom in the Universe intoxicates like wine.
O Zealot, press me not, I pray, in language harsh and rude,
For unto those of goodly kind allowed are all things good.
O Qāsim, silence ! to the steed of speech apply thy rein,
That Love's high priest may speak of things that neither fade
nor wane.

E. G. Browne.

VI

THE END OF THE PATH

LOVE AND ITS FRUITS. FELLOWSHIP, GNOSIS,
THE BEATIFIC VISION AND UNION. THE LOVER
AND THE BELOVED. THE LIFE OF THE SAINTS
IN GOD.

RĀBI‘A AL-‘ADAWIYYA

(156)

I love Thee with two loves, a love that is passion
And one which besides Thou hast earned as Thy due.
The passionate love is the thought which forgetting
All else is of You, aye, for ever of You.
Thou earnedst the other by rending asunder
All veils and disclosing Thyself to my view.
Not mine be the praise for the one or the other
The praise and the thanks are all Thine for the two.

D. S. Margoliouth.

ABŪ SULAYMĀN AL-DĀRĀNĪ

(157)

None refrains from the lusts of this world save him in whose
heart there is a light that keeps him always busied with the
next world.

It may be that while the gnostic sleeps in his bed, God will
reveal to him the mystery and will make luminous that which
He never will reveal to one standing in prayer. When the
gnostic's spiritual eye is opened, his bodily eye is shut : they
see nothing but Him.

If gnosis (*ma'rifa*) were to take visible form, all that looked
thereon would die at the sight of its beauty and loveliness and
goodness and grace and every brightness would become dark
beside the splendour thereof. Gnosis is nearer to silence than
speech.

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When the heart weeps because it has lost, the spirit laughs because it has found.

R. A. Nicholson.

DHU'L-NŪN

(158)

I die, and yet not dies in me
The ardour of my love for Thee,
Nor hath Thy love, my only goal,
Assuaged the fever of my soul.

To Thee alone my spirit cries ;
In Thee my whole ambition lies,
And still Thy Wealth is far above
The poverty of my small love.

I turn to Thee in my request,
And seek in Thee my final rest ;
To Thee my loud lament is brought,
Thou dweltest in my secret thought.

However long my sickness be,
This wearisome infirmity,
Never to men will I declare
The burden Thou hast made me bear.

To Thee alone is manifest
The heavy labour of my breast,
Else never kin or neighbours know
The brimming measure of my woe.

A fever burns below my heart
And ravages my every part ;
It hath destroyed my strength and stay,
And smouldered all my soul away.

Guidest Thou not upon the road
The rider wearied by his load,
Delivering from the steeps of death
The traveller as he wandereth ?

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Didst Thou not light a Beacon too
For them that found the Guidance true
But carried not within their hand
The faintest glimmer of its brand ?

O then to me Thy Favour give
That, so attended, I may live,
And overwhelm with ease from Thee
The rigour of my poverty.

A. J. Arberry.

YAHYĀ B. MU'ĀDH AL-RĀZĪ

(159)

The lover joys to dwell
In love with Love ;
Yet some, as strange I tell,
Do Love reprove.

About God's Love I hover
While I have breath,
To be His perfect lover
Until my death.

A. J. Arberry.

ABŪ YAZĪD AL-BISTĀMĪ

(160)

Be in a domain where neither good nor evil exists : both of them belong to the world of created things ; in the presence of Unity there is neither command nor prohibition.

All this talk and turmoil and noise and movement is outside of the veil ; within the veil is silence and calm and rest.

Dost thou hear how there comes a voice from the brooks of running water ? But when they reach the sea they are quiet, and the sea is neither augmented by their incoming nor diminished by their outgoing.

R. A. Nicholson.

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(161)

Creatures are subject to 'states' (*ahwāl*), but the gnostic has no 'state', because his vestiges are effaced and his essence is annihilated by the essence of another and his traces are lost in another's traces.

I went from God to God, until they cried from me in me, "O Thou I!"—i.e. I attained the stage of annihilation in God.

Nothing is better for Man than to be without aught, having no asceticism, no theory, no practice. When he is without all he is with all . . . They asked (*Bistāmī*), "When does a man know that he has attained real gnosis?" He said: "At the time when he becomes annihilated under the knowledge of God, and is made everlasting on the carpet of God, without self and without creature."

R. A. Nicholson.

AHMAD AL-KHARRĀZ

(162)

Know that the disciple who is seeking after truthfulness acts in all his affairs in the fear of God, keeping watch over his heart, his purpose, and his members, and examining them. He concentrates his purpose, being afraid lest aught which concerns him not should enter into it, and being afraid of heedlessness, lest his bodily motions as manifested in his external members cause him to be somewhat wanting, and lest the purposes which enter inwardly into his heart perturb his (single) purpose. Thus he frees himself from all such motions, even if they be right and proper: for the heart is overwhelmed by an urgent desire that his recollection (of God) shall be perpetual, and his purpose single. If he continues thus, his heart gains a quick understanding, and his thoughts become clear, and light lodges in his heart: he draws near to God, and God overwhelms his heart and purpose. Then he speaks, and his heart surges with the recollection of God: the love of God lurks deeply hidden in his inmost heart, cleaving to his mind, and never leaving it. Then his soul is joyfully busied with secret converse with God, and passionate study,

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and ardent talk. So he is eating and drinking, sleeping (and waking), in all his motions : for when God's nearness takes possession of a man's heart, it overwhelms all else, both the inward infiltrations of the purposes and the outward motions of the members. Thereafter that man continues, going or coming, taking or giving : there prevails in him the purpose which has ruled his mind, namely, the love of God and His nearness.

A. J. Arberry.

AL-JUNAID OF BAGHDAD

(163)

Now I have known, O Lord,
What lies within my heart ;
In secret, from the world apart,
My tongue hath talked with my Adored.

So in a manner we
United are, and One ;
Yet otherwise disunion
Is our estate eternally.

Though from my gaze profound
Deep awe hath hid Thy Face,
In wondrous and ecstatic Grace
I feel Thee touch my inmost ground.

A. J. Arberry.

HALLĀJ

(164)

Now stands no more between the Truth and me
Or reasoned demonstration,
Or proof or revelation :
Now, brightly blazing forth, Truth's luminary
Hath driven out of sight
Each flickering, lesser light.

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He only knoweth God, whom God hath shown
Himself : shall the eternal
Be known of the diurnal ?
Nor in His handiwork may God be known :
Can endless time be pent
Into a chance event ?

Of Him, through Him, and unto Him, a sign
Of truth, an attestation
He grants through inspiration :
Of Him, through Him, His own, a truth divine,
A knowledge proved and sure
Hath made our hearts secure.

This I have proven, this I now declare,
This is my faith unbending,
And this my joy unending :
There is no god but God ! no rivals share
His peerless majesty,
His claimed supremacy.

When men have been alone with God, and know,
This is their tongues' expression,
And this their hearts' confession :
This ecstasy of joy knits friend and foe
In common brotherhood,
Working to common good.

A. J. Arberry.

IKHWĀN AL-ṢAFĀ

(165)

Praiseworthy is the free act of the soul : admirable are the actions which have proceeded from rational consideration ; and lastly, obedience to the Divine World-Law is worthy of the reward of being raised to the celestial world of spheres. But this requires longing for what is above ; and therefore the highest virtue is Love, which strives after union with God, the first loved one, and which is evinced even in this life in the form of religious patience and forbearance with all created

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beings. Such love gains in this life serenity of soul, freedom of heart, and peace with the whole world and in the life to come ascension to Eternal Light.

Our true essence is the soul and the highest aim of our existence should be to live, with Socrates, devoted to the Intellect, and with Christ, to the Law of Love. Nevertheless the body must be properly looked after in order that the soul may have time to attain to its full development.

T. J. de Boer (*trans.* E. M. R. Jones).

ABŪ ḤĀMID AL-GHAZĀLĪ

(166)

Human perfection resides in this, that the love of God should conquer a man's heart and possess it wholly, and even if it does not possess it wholly should predominate in the heart over the love of all other things. . . . He whose inner eye is opened to behold the beauty and perfection of God will despise all outward sights in comparison, however fair they may be . . . God alone is really worthy of our love and if anyone loves Him not, it is because he does not know Him. Whatever we love in anyone, we love because it is a reflection of Him . . . However great the distance between them, man can love God because of the affinity indicated in the saying, "God created man in His own likeness".

C. Field.

(167)

Know that he who knows God loves Him inevitably and as his knowledge of Him strengthens, his love of Him also strengthens, and love when it grows strong is called passion and passion is nothing else than love strengthened beyond bound . . . Know that every loveliness is beloved when there is one to perceive that loveliness . . . And if the loveliness be in majesty and might and loftiness of order and beauty of qualities and character and the willing of things excellent for the world in general and pouring them out upon it constantly and other such spiritual qualities, it is perceived by the sense of the heart . . .

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And should it not be held reasonable to love passionately Him from Whom are seen to proceed excellent things, yea, Him Whom, in verity, there is no excellency and no loveliness and no loved one in the world but it is a trace from among the traces of His generosity and a spoonful from the sea of His bounty. And every beauty and loveliness in the world which is perceived by the intellect and by eyes and by ears and the rest of the senses from the beginning of the world to its end and from the summit of the Pleiades to the extremity of the earth, is a grain from the treasure-houses of His power and a ray from the lights of His presence. So who shall tell me that the love of Him is not reasonable Whose description this is . . .

Then His perfection is extolled Who has veiled Himself from appearing by force of His appearing and by the rays of Whose light eyes are filled. "If it were not for His veiling Himself with seventy veils of His light, the glories of His face would burn up the eyes of those regarding the loveliness of His presence." And if it were not that His appearance caused His concealment, verily intellects would be confused and hearts bewildered . . . Though hearts were built up of stone and iron verily the morning would see them crushed in pieces under the first beginning of the light of His self-manifestation. For how shall the eyes of bats endure the noonday light of the sun ?

D. B. Macdonald.

(168)

The Vision of God is the greatest happiness to which a man can attain . . . Seeing (then) that God is the highest possible object of knowledge, the knowledge of Him must afford more delight than any other. But the delight of knowledge still falls short of the delight of vision, . . . Our imprisonment in bodies of clay and water, and entanglement in the things of sense constitute a veil which hides the Vision of God from us . . . The truth of the matter is that the knowledge of God acquired on earth will in the next world change into the Vision of God and he who has never learnt the knowledge will never have the Vision . . . Abu Suleiman said, "He who is busy

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with himself now will be busy with himself then and he who is occupied with God now will be occupied with Him then."

He who supposes that it is possible to enjoy happiness in the next world apart from the love of God is far gone in error, for the essence of the future life is to arrive at God as an Object of desire long aimed at and attained through countless obstacles. This enjoyment of God is happiness. But if he had no delight in God before, he will not delight in Him then, and if his joy in God was but slight before it will be but slight then. In brief, our future happiness will be in strict proportion to the degree in which we have loved God here.

C. Field.

(169)

As the physical vision is a complement and perfection of the fantastic representation of the object, the Beatific Vision is a clearer and more perfect perception of God as He appears to the mind in this life. God will reveal Himself to the elect in all the splendour of His manifestation. This epiphany, compared with the knowledge of God possessed by the elect, will be like the manifestation of an object in a mirror compared with a fantastic representation of it. That epiphany of God is what we call the Beatific Vision. It is, then, a real vision, provided it is clear that here we do not understand by *vision* a complement of the imaginative representation of the imaginable object, represented in a concrete form, with dimensions, site, etc. The knowledge which you have gained of God on earth will be completed in heaven and will become presence and experience. Between this presence in the future life and the knowledge acquired on earth there will be no more difference than what comes from a greater manifestation and clearness.

Asin Palacies (*trans.* H. Sunderland).

(170)

The one who has passed beyond states and stages is distant from knowing aught save God Most High to such a degree that he is distant even from knowledge of his own self and its states and intercourse and is like one stupefied, a diver in the very

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sea of Witnessing . . . Of such as are in this condition the Sūfis use the expression *faniya*, "he has passed away from himself and come to an end" and whenever anyone passes away from himself he must pass away from all besides himself : then it is as though he passed away from everything except the One—the witnessed one . . . Such a condition as this sometimes suddenly appears with regard to created things, and sometimes, also, with regard to the Creator. For the most part it is like swift lightning which stands not and lasts not : if it should last, human strength could not endure it. . . . This is the rank of him who wades the deep sea of verities and has passed the shoreland of states and works, and has occupied himself with the purity of the Unity and is confirmed in absolute sincerity.

D. B. Macdonald.

(171)

These gnostics, on their return from their Ascent into the heaven of Reality, confess with one voice that they saw nought existent there save the One Real. Some of them, however, arrived at this scientifically, and others experimentally and subjectively. From these last the plurality of things fell away in its entirety. They were drowned in the absolute Unitude, and their intelligences were lost in Its abyss. Therein became they as dumbfounded things. No capacity remained within them save to recall ALLAH ; yea, not so much as the capacity to recall their own selves. So there remained nothing with them save ALLAH. They became drunken with a drunkenness wherein the sway of their own intelligence disappeared ; so that one exclaimed, "I am the ONE REAL !" and another, "Glory be to ME ! How great is MY glory ! ", and another, "Within this robe is nought but Allah ! " . . . But the words of Lovers Passionate in their intoxication and ecstasy must be hidden away and not spoken of. . . .

Now, when this state prevails, it is called in relation to him who experiences it, Extinction, nay, Extinction of Extinction, for the soul has become extinct to itself, extinct to its own extinction ; for it becomes unconscious of itself and unconscious of its own unconsciousness, since were it conscious

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of its own unconsciousness, it would be conscious of itself. In relation to the man immersed in this state, the state is called, in the language of metaphor, "Identity"; in the language of reality, "Unification".

W. H. T. Gairdner.

'UMAR KHAYYĀM

(172)

My true condition I may thus explain
In the short verses, which the whole contain :

"From love to Thee I now lay down my life,
In hope Thy Love will raise me up again."

Although the creeds number some seventy-three,
I hold with none but that of love to Thee ;

What matter faith, unfaith, obedience, sin ?
Thou'rt all we need, the rest is vanity.

E. H. Whinfield.

SANĀ'Ī

(173)

That heart which stands aloof from pain and woe
No seal or signature of Love can show :

Thy Love, Thy Love I chose, and as for wealth,
If wealth be not my portion, be it so !
For wealth, I ween, pertaineth to the World ;
Ne'er can the World and Love together go !
So long as Thou dost dwell within my heart
Ne'er can my heart become the thrall of Woe."

E. G. Browne.

SUHRAWARDĪ AL-MAQTŪL

(174)

The hearts of your lovers yearn for you and aspire after the pleasure of that meeting . . . To meet with you (the lover's) heart is always yearning : to please you, his eyes are ever watchful . . . In risking their lives, (lovers) were prodigal, not sparing : for they know that such prodigality was (followed

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by) success. The herald of (mysterious) truths called unto them and from morning till evening, they continued obedient to that call. . . . By Allah ! they sought not permission to approach the door of the beloved, till they were invited thither and had received the key. Never do they find pleasure in discourse of which the beloved is not the subject : all their time is therefore (continued) happiness. They appeared in the (beloved one's) presence, though every sign which could attest the existence of their persons had disappeared, and when they saw the beloved they were revealed . . . He (the beloved) annihilated them from before Him : the veils of existence which shaded them were removed and their souls were dissolved. Try to resemble them, if you are not like them ; to resemble the generous (brings) good success.

Ibn Khallikān (*trans.* M. de Slane.)

(175)

He who attains Tranquillity knows about the minds of men, and acquires knowledge of unknown things and his penetration of mind becomes perfect. . . . And this Tranquillity becomes such that if man desires to keep it off from himself, he cannot do so. Then man reaches such a stage that whenever he likes, he gives up the body and goes to the world of (Divine) Majesty, . . . he also passes this stage. He becomes such that he does not look on himself and his knowledge of his existence is lost . . . When the knowledge of humanity (also) disappears, it is the stage of Obliteration and is the stage of " Everyone that is in it, will pass away and there remaineth but the face of Thy Lord, the Glorious and Beneficent, . . . The highest grade (of those unified) lost and considered themselves lost in the appearance of God, and said " There is no I but Me " . . . I-ship, Thou-ship and He-ship are all superfluous reflections about the essence of the unity of the Self-existence. . . . As long as a man has human attachments with this world he will not reach the world of Divinity above which there is no other stage since it has no end. A pious man was asked : " What is Sūfism ? " he answered : " Its beginning is God and as regards the end it has no end."

O. Spies and S. K. Khatak.

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‘ĀTTĀR

(176)

Once on a time from all the Circles seven
Between the steadfast Earth and rolling Heaven
The Birds of all Note, Plumage and Degree,
That float in Air, and roost upon the Tree ;

• • • •
Flock'd from all quarters into full Divan,
On no less solemn business than to find,
Or choose, a Sultan Khalif of their kind,
For whom, if never theirs, or lost, they pined.

• • • •
To whom the Tajidar (hudhud) . . .
“ Oh lost so long in Exile, you disclaim
The very Fount of Being whence you came

• • • •
Then cried the Spokesman, ‘ Be it even so :
Let us but see the Fount from which we flow,
And, seeing, lose ourselves therein.’ ” And, Lo !
Before the Word was utter'd, or the Tongue
Of Fire replied, or Portal open flung,
They were *within*—they were before the *Throne*,
Before the Majesty that sat thereon,
But wrapt in so insufferable a Blaze
Of Glory as beat down their baffled gaze,
Which downward droppimg, fell upon a Scroll
That, Lightning-like, flash'd back on each the whole
Past half-forgotten Story of his Soul :

• • • •
(Then) their old selves self-acknowledged and self-loathed,
And in the Soul's Integrity reclothed,
Once more they ventured from the Dust to raise
Their Eyes—up to the Throne—into the Blaze,
And in the centre of the Glory there

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Beheld the Figure of—*Themselves* as't were
Transfigured—looking to *Themselves*, beheld
The Figure on the Throne enmiracled,
Until their eyes *themselves* and *That* between
Did hesitate which *Seer* was, which *Seen* ;
They That, That They : Another, yet the Same ;
Dividual, yet the One : from whom there came
A Voice of awful Answer, scarce discern'd

The Sun of my Perfection is a Glass
Wherein from *Seeing* into *Being* pass
All who, reflecting as reflected see
Themselves in Me and Me in Them ; not *Me*,
But all of Me that a contracted Eye
Is comprehensive of Infinity :
Nor yet *Themselves* ; no Selves, Out of The All
Fractions, from which they split and whither fall,
As Water lifted from the Deep, again
Falls back in individual Drops of Rain
Then melts into the Universal Main.
All you have been, and seen, and done and thought,
Not *You* but *I* have seen and been and wrought :

I was the Tajidar who led the Track :
I was the little Briar that pull'd you back :
Sin and Contrition—Retribution owed,
And cancell'd—Pilgrim, Pilgrimage, and Road
Was but Myself toward Myself : and Your
Arrival but *Myself* at my own Door :
Who in your Fraction of *Myself* behold
Myself within the Mirror *Myself* hold
To see *Myself* in, and each part of Me
That sees himself, though drown'd, shall ever see.
Come you lost Atoms to your Centre draw,
And be the Eternal Mirror that you saw :
Rays that have wander'd into Darkness wide
Return, and back into your Sun subside.

Edward Fitzgerald.

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'UMAR SUHRAWARDĪ

(177)

The dreariness of the (lover's solitary) nights was dispelled and his turn of union (with the beloved) drew near: and my union with Thee made those jealous, who used to pity me formerly when suffering from Thy aversion. I swear by the truth of Thy existence that, since Thou art now present, I care not for any of my former disappointments. Thou camest to me who was deprived of life and small was the price for which Thou didst obtain me (he was dead by sin and became the servant of God by renouncing the world). The hearts (of men) are unable to conceive Thee; but, O, the delicious source whereof I am allowed to drink! (I avow that) all which is forbidden to mortals is forbidden also to me; but how sweet in my bosom is the love I bear Thee. Love for Thee has drenched my very bones: what then have I to do with that which is not love? Bitter thirst oppresses not the destitute when near him are sources of the purest water.

Ibn Khallikān (*trans.* M. de Slane).

IBN AL-FĀRID

(178)

Take a single time
For thy consideration—no long while—
And thou shalt find all that appears to thee
The act of One alone, but in the veils
Of occultation wrapt: when he removes
The curtain, thou beholdest none but him,
And in the shapes confusion no more reigns,
And thou dost realize when he reveals
That in thy darkness thou wast guided by
His light to view his action;

I dived into the seas of union—nay
I plunged in them, in all my loneliness,
And brought to surface every peerless pearl,
That I might hear my acts with seeing ears
And look upon my words with listening eyes,

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So if the nightingale amid the grove
Lamenteth, and the birds in every tree
Warbling respond to her ; if flautist play
Upon the pipe harmonious to the strings
Swept by the singing-girl, the while she chants
Tenderest verses and at every trill
The spirits thrilled ascend to Paradise—
Then I delight me in each masterpiece
Of my creative art, declaring free
My union and sweet intercourse from all
Association with all otherness.

A. J. Arberry.

IBN AL-FĀRID

(179)

that dispenser of

The mystic union, when he greeted me
At *Yea or neaver*, pointed me a bond
Of spiritual kinship. From his light
The lantern of my essence shone on me,
My eve in me was radiant as my morn.
And I was made to see myself, myself
Yet here ; and I was he ; and I beheld
That he was I, that light my radiance,
In me the holy vale was sanctified,
Where I bestowed my putting off of shoes
On my companions, an unstinted gift.

. . . And in the world

Of recollection still the soul doth own
Its ancient knowledge my disciples pray
That I bestow on them. Haste then to my
Eternal union.

A. J. Arberry.

IBN AL-'ARABĪ

(180)

In the Beatific Vision God manifests Himself to the elect in a general epiphany which, nevertheless, assumes various forms corresponding to the mental conceptions of God formed by

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the faithful on earth. There is, then, one single epiphany, which is multiple only by reason of the difference of forms by which it is received. The Vision impregnates the elect with Divine light, each experiencing the Vision according to the knowledge of the Divine dogma or dogmas gained by him on earth.

The Divine light pervades the beings of the elect and radiates from them, reflected as if by mirrors, on everything around them. The spiritual enjoyment produced by the contemplation of this reflection is even greater than that of the Vision itself. For, at the moment when they experience the Beatific Vision, the elect are transported and losing all consciousness, cannot appreciate the joy of the Vision. Delight they feel, but the very intensity of the vision makes it impossible for them to realise it. The reflected light, on the other hand, does not overpower them, and they are thus able to participate in all its joys.

Asin Palacios (*trans.* H. Sunderland).

(181)

Thou, in thy stages of drawing nigh and of being far off, wast not a thing beside God, but thou hadst not the 'knowledge of the soul', and did not understand that thou art He without thou. Thou, when thou art united to God—that is, when thou knowest thyself—thou understandest that thou art He. And thou wast not aware before that thou wast He or He other than He. Then, when the knowledge comes upon thee, thou understandest that thou knowest God by God, not by thyself. . . .

So then, the knower and that which he knows are both one, and he who writes and that with which he writes are one and seer and seen are one. For the knower is His attribute and the known is His essence: and he who unites is His attribute, and that with which he unites is His essence; and the attribute and that to which it is attributed are one. And this is the explanation of the saying, "Whoso knows himself knows his Lord".

So whoever understands this example knows that there is no union nor division and he knows that the knower is He and

THE END OF THE PATH

the known is He, and the seer is He and the seen is He, he who unites is He and that with which he unites is He. There does not unite with Him other than He, and there is not separated from Him other than He. . . .

Understand, therefore, that the knower's knowledge of himself is God's knowledge of Himself, because his soul is nothing but He. . . . And whoever attains to this state, his existence is no more, outwardly or inwardly, ought but the existence of Him. Nay, his existence is the existence of God, and his word the word of God, and his act the act of God and his claim to the knowledge of God is a claim to the knowledge of himself . . . Then if "the believer be the mirror of the Believed" he is He, in his own eye, that is, in His own sight, for his eye is the eye of God and his sight the sight of God.

I know the Lord by the Lord, without doubt or wavering.
My essence is His essence in truth, without defect or flaw.
There is no becoming between these two and my soul it is
 which manifests that secret,
And since I knew myself without blending or mixture,
I attained to union with my Beloved, without far or near.

T. H. Weir.

RŪMĪ

(182)

Love the pathway is
Of God's Messenger ;
Love our mother was,
We the sons she bare

Mother chaste and pure,
Veiled in us thou art,
Hidden evermore
From our faithless heart,

If life be gone, fresh life to you
God offereth,
A life eternal, to renew
This life of death

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The Fount of Immortality
In Love is found ;
Then come, and in this boundless sea
Of Love be drowned.

• • • •
If love shall be thy part
Thou wilt not suffer loss, my heart ;
Is it so sorrowful
That thou art moving to the Soul ?

• • • •
A thousand lives are less
In worth, than loneliness ;
Freedom is greater gain
Than o'er the world to reign.

Alone within thy cell
Awhile with God to dwell
Shall prove of mightier worth
Than all the sweets of earth.

A. J. Arberry.

(183)

Joyous smile, O Love, sweet-fashioned, all our own !
Leech by whom our woes and ills away are done !
O thou Medicine of our pride and self-conceit !
Thou who art our Plato and our Galen meet !
High aloft doth soar the earthly frame through Love ;
Dance the hills, inebriate with joy thereof.
When the light of God's own face illumined Sinai,
There the tidings : " Moses fell and swooned away."
Had I found a comrade leal, a friend at need,
Fain had I revealed my secret like the reed.
Whosoe'er is twinned from them that ken his speech
Speechless is, however much he talk or preach.
When the rose is past, the garden's beauty gone,
In the plaining bulbul bides nor wail nor moan.

THE END OF THE PATH

All is the Beloved, the lover's but a veil ;
Living the Beloved, the lover dead and pale.
He in whom the fire of Love doth burn not high
Is a bird withouten wings, that may not fly.
How may sense or reason find whereon to stand
Till the Loved One's radiance reach a helping hand ?
This the work of Love, the secret to unveil.
Look in burnished mirror, that will tell the tale.
Is the Secret shown not in thy mirror-soul ?
Then its face is rubbed not clear of rust in whole.
Were it cleansed of every stain of rust indign,
Then would flash the radiance of the Sun Divine !

E. J. W. Gibb.

(184)

O Bird, that fret'st to Freedom win ;
Love caged thee in that Prison thin.
O Soul, if thou, too, wouldest be free,
Then love the Love that shuts thee in.
'Tis Love that twisteth every snare ;
'Tis Love that snaps the Bond of Sin.
Love sounds the Music of the Spheres ;
Love echoes through Earth's harshest din.
Love fills with Fragrance Heaven's sweet Air ;
Love's deft Hands Life's gold Fibres spin.
The World is God's pure Mirror clear,
To Eyes when free from Clouds within.
With Love's own Eyes the Mirror view,
And there see God to Self akin.
Then praise Him, Soul, enflamed with Love
As Larks in Dawn, new Songs begin.

W. Hastie.

(185)

Into my heart's night
Along a narrow way
I groped ; and lo ! the light,
An infinite land of day.

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I sought a soul in the sea,
And found a coral there ;
Beneath the foam for me
An ocean was all laid bare.

Happy was I
In the pearl's heart to lie :
Till, lashed by life's hurricane,
Like a tired wave I ran.

The secret of the sea
I uttered thunderously ;
Like a spent cloud on the shore
I slept and stirred no more.

A. J. Arberry.

(186)

Although thy Brightness glistens in the Sun, indeed ;
Yet is my Light with Thine all radiant, One, indeed !
Thou mad'st of Dust all glitt'ring the circling Heavens above ;
Yet will with mine thy Spirit ne'er Union shun, indeed !
To Dust return the Heavens : again Heavens spring from
Dust ;
Yet hast thou in my Being thy own Life spun, indeed !
Now have the Words Eternal that through Heaven's vastness
ring,
Found Home in human Bosom, and dearer none, indeed !
Thou hast the Sunbeams hidden, that in the diamond glow,
Deep, deep in Earth's dark Chambers, a Wonder done, indeed !
See—though in vile Soil feeding, and drinking filthy slime,
To yon Rose peerless Beauty, in Love, hath run, indeed !

O heart, and be it thou swimmest in Flood, or glow'st in Fire,
The same are Fire and Flood : Be pure, my Son, indeed !

O MEVLANA, at Morning I woke, and found with thee,
My Eyes from Tears all brightened, and Heaven now won,
indeed !

W. Hastie.

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'IRĀQĪ

(187)

Lodgers we who on Thy threshold dwell
and nightingales that in Thy garden sing,
whether we leave Thy door, or waiting stand,
of only Thee we speak, of Thee we hear,
Since we are captives caught within Thy nets
where shall we thrust our passion or our heads ?
And since in Thy affection we draw breath
how shall we yearn for strangers ? Lo, we lay
our heads upon the threshold of Thy door
waiting to come to Thee. Since we have quaffed
the beaker of Thy love, we yield our hearts
and make our lives Thy ransom : since we come
again into Thy street, we turn our backs
on all that is, save Thee. Our souls are bound
to serve Thee, though in grief, and we have died
to selfhood ! We are captives of Thy love
and have not strength to flee, Thy beauty's fever
hath lit a flame : shall not our hearts be burned ?

A. J. Arberry.

(188)

Exalted high is Love o'er men's ambition,
And o'er ideas of union or partition,
For when a thing transcends all thought and mention
'Tis freed from likeness and from comprehension.

It is veiled by the Veil of Glory and isolated in its Perfection. Its Attributes are the Veils of its Essence and implicit in that Essence. Its Splendour is the Lover of its Beauty, which is involved in that Splendour. For ever it makes love to itself, and concerns not itself with aught else. Every moment it casts aside the Veil from the face of some loved one, and every instant it raises a new song in the way of loverhood.

Within the Veil Love sings its air :
Where is the lover to hear it, where ?
Each moment it chants a different lay,
And ever some melody fresh doth play.

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All the Universe echoes its song :
Who hath heard such an anthem long ?
Its secret out from the world doth leap :
How can an Echo its secret keep ?
I tell no tales, but loud and clear
From the tongue of each atom its secret hear.

Every moment with every tongue it tells its secret to its own ear ; every instant with all its ears it hears its speech from its own tongue ; every minute with all its eyes it flashes its beauty on its own vision ; every second in every aspect it presents its being to its own notice.

Knowest thou what it whispers in my ears ?

I am Love, for the which in these worlds there is found
not a place :

The 'Anqā am I of the West, who hath never a trace.
By my glance and my eyebrow the world I have captured, I trow
Heed not that I do not possess either arrow or bow.
Revealed in the face of each atom am I, like the sun ;
So apparent am I that my form is apparent to none.
I speak with all tongues, and with every ear do I hear
Though, strange as it seems, I have neither a tongue nor an ear.
I am all that exists in all worlds, so 'tis patent and clear
That neither in this world nor that have I rival or peer.

E. G. Browne.

(189)

Love is a fire, whose spark within the heart
consumes the veil of every accident :
when intricate desire is wholly burned,
naught else abiding, love alone abides.

Love is a quality of the Creator :
lover, and love, and beauty—three, yet One
Creator and Sustainer, only God,
He, gazing on Himself, Himself did love :
that beauteous Artificer of Beauty
“ I was a Treasure ” said, and so desired
to shew the door of Being’s treasury

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and ope it with the key of Qualities ;
and being shewn in private Attributes
before the world His Essence was displayed.
In perfect loveliness He was revealed,
giving to spiritual men the power
of love. His manifesting attributes
found housing in the lover : power from Power,
knowledge from Knowledge, hearing from Hearing, sight
from Sight, and speech from Speech Divine informed ;
will grew from Will, and life of Life was born,
beauty from Beauty glowed, continuance
of love in His Continuance increased,
in man's affection God's affection shone,
and of his Love revealing man's love sprang.
Since in these attributes man knows the Friend,
seeing himself, he doth the Friend behold ;
so, secretly, he doth His name proclaim,
" I have no other in my cloak but God."
When man strips off the cloak, he doth escape :
strip off that cloak, which serves but as a house.
Now sign the document of fellowship,
and chant the formula of severance :
when thou transcendest " Glory be to God ",
wipe off the dust of self-hood from thy soul.

A. J. Arberry.

NAFASĪ

(190)

Attraction is the act of God, Who draws man towards Himself. Man sets his face towards this world and is entangled in the love of wealth and dignity, until the grace of God steps in and turns his heart towards God. The tendency proceeding from God is called Attraction ; that which proceeds from man is called Inclination, Desire and Love. As the inclination increases, its name changes and it causes the Traveller to renounce everything else becoming a *Kiblah*, to set his face towards God ; when it has become his *Kiblah* and made him forget everything but God, it is developed into Love.

E. H. Palmer.

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SHABISTĀRĪ

191

Union with "The Truth" is separation from the creature state,
Friendship with Him is estrangement from self,
When the contingent wipes off the dust of contingency,
Nothing remains save Necessary Being.
The existence of the two worlds is as a dream,
In the moment of eternity they become naught.

Absolute Being by its own perfection is pervading all,
Phenomenal objects are mere imaginary things ;
Imaginary things are not really existent,
Though the numbers are many, only One is counted.

In a moment this world passes away,
None remains in the world save "The Truth",
At that moment you attain proximity
You stripped of 'self' are 'united' to the Beloved.

E. H. Whinfield.

IBN-I-YAMĪN

(192)

From the void of Non-Existence to this dwelling-house of clay
I came, and rose from stone to plant ; but that hath passed
away !

Thereafter, through the working of the Spirit's toil and strife,
I gained, but soon abandoned, some lowly form of life :

That too hath passed away !

In a human breast, no longer a mere unheeding brute,
This tiny drop of Being to a pearl I did transmute :

That too hath passed away !

At the Holy Temple next did I foregather with the throng
Of Angels, compassed it about, and gazed upon it long :

That too hath passed away !

Forsaking Ibn-i-Yamīn, and from this too soaring free,
I abandoned all beside Him, so that naught was left but HE :

All else hath passed away !

E. G. Browne.

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HĀFIẓ

193

In Eternity without beginning the radiancy of Thy beauty
gloried in its own splendour ;
Love was revealed and its fire set the world aflame.

Reason desired to kindle its lamp from that flame of Thy love,
The lightning of jealousy flashed, and the world was thrown
into confusion.

Others staked their fortune on ease and would not take up
the burden of Love ;
We, Thy lovers, were the ones whose hearts, experienced in
grief, staked all on grief and took up the burden of Love.

He, God, looked forth and beheld His own form in the world,
in the person of Adam ;
He pitched His tent in the field of Adam's body, which He
had formed of water and clay.

Hāfiẓ wrote in his joy-book of Love-for-Thee on the day when
his pen denounced all desire for the goods of this world, and
renounced happiness in what the world can offer.

Anonymous.

ABŪ AL-MAWĀHIB AL-SHĀTHILĪ

(194)

The saint is a servant, worshipping and fulfilling the duties
of servantship (*'ubūdīyah*) : he is truthful, faithful and
righteous according to Sufism. The poor man he prefers to
the rich, the small quantity to the large, and the low to the
high ; he is of genuine feeling in the opinion of men . . . A
saint is one who occupies his time with all kinds of meritorious
works (*qurabāt*) so that his time is blessed even as his place is
blessed by him. . . .

The saint is one who smiles if saluted ; in conversation he
is pleasant ; when asked he shall give ; should you trespass
in his presence, he utters not a malignity ; when others divulge
secrets, he conceals ; of princes he knows he is not proud, and

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the poor he does not disdain ; nothing shall mar the radiance of his face ; the next world he does not sell for the present. Through God he is rich ; before Him he is humble ; from Him he takes ; to Him he gives ; on Him he depends, he fears none other than God ; his trust is only in God.

E. J. Jurji.

JĀMĪ

(195)

Wherefore it behoves thee to strive and hide thy *self* from thy sight, and occupy thyself with Very Being, and concern thyself with the "Truth". For the various grades of created things are theatres of His revealed beauty, and all things that exist are mirrors of His perfections.

And in this course thou must persevere until He mingles Himself with thy soul, and thine own individual existence passes out of thy sight. Then, if thou regardest thyself, it is He whom thou art regarding ; if thou speakest of thyself, it is He of whom thou art speaking. The relative has become the Absolute, and "I am the Truth" is equivalent to "He is the Truth".

If love of rose or bulbul fill thine heart,
Thyself a rose or eager bulbul art.

Thou art a part ; the "Truth" is all in all.
Dwell on the "Truth", and cease to be a part.

Of my soul's union with this fleshly frame,
Of life and death Thou art the end and aim.

I pass away ; Thou only dost endure.
When I say "me", 'tis "Thee" I mean to name.
When will this mortal dress be torn away,
And Beauty Absolute His face display,

Merging my soul in His resplendent light,
Blinding my heart with His o'erpowering ray ?

E. H. Whinfield.

DĀRĀ SHAKŪH

(196)

Canst thou wonder, that they who walk in the true path,
are drowned in the sea of mysterious adoration ? They

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disregard life through affection for its Giver; they abandon the world through remembrance of its Maker; they remember their Beloved, and resign to Him both this life and the next. Through remembrance of God, they shun all mankind: they are so enamoured of the Cup-bearer, that they spill the wine from the cup. . . .

They are a sect fully employed, but sitting in retirement; their feet are of earth, but their breath is a flame. . . . like wind, they are concealed and move nimbly; like stone, they are silent, yet repeat God's praises. . . . Night and day are they plunged in an ocean of ardent desire, till they are unable, through astonishment, to distinguish night from day. So enraptured are they with the beauty of Him, who decorated the human form, that with the beauty of the form itself, they have no concern; and, if ever they behold a beautiful shape, they see in it the mystery of God's work.

He only has drunk the pure wine of unity, who has forgotten, by remembering God, all things else in both worlds.

Sir William Jones.

MISRĪ NIYĀZĪ

(197)

I am he who knoweth all the mysteries of human lore,
I'm the life of earth, and I the treasures of Truth explore,
Hid within me lie the secrets of the Mysteries' Mystery;
Here within I hold the Trust, and I'm the treasure-house
therefor,

Clear in everything the beauty of The Godhead I behold,
So whene'er I look on yonder mirrors, joyance comes me o'er.

All existent things I've given for the One Existency;
Now am I one with Thine Essence, Names, and Attributes
and glore.

Whatsoever be on earth, in heaven, is bounden unto me;
I'm the talisman all-potent ruling hid and overt lore.

I'm that Misrī, I am monarch o'er the Egypt of my frame;
Though in form contingent, I'm in truth the Mystery of Yore.

E. J. W. Gibb.

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FĀZIL

(198)

Beauty, wherever it is seen, whether in humanity or in the vegetable or mineral world, is God's revelation of Himself ; He is the all-beautiful, those objects in which we perceive beauty being, as it were, so many mirrors in each of which some fraction of His essential self is revealed. By virtue of its Divine origin, the beauty thus perceived exercises a subtle influence over the beholder, awakening in him the sense of love, whereby he is at last enabled to enter into communion with God Himself. Thus God is the ultimate object of every lover's passion ; but while this is as yet unrealised by the lover, while he still imagines that the earthly fair one is the true inspirer and final goal of his affection, his love is still in the 'typal' stage, and he himself still upon that allegoric 'Bridge'.

So Love is the guide to the World Above, the stair leading up to the portal of Heaven ; through the fire of Love iron is transmuted into gold, and the dark clay into a shining gem. Love it is that makes the heedless wise, and changes the ignorant into an adept of the Divine mysteries ; Love is the unveiler of the Truth, the hidden way into the Sanctuary of God. And as for the true Lover, he is pure of heart and holy of life, worldly things are of no account with him, dust and gold being equal in his eyes ; generosity and gentleness distinguish him ; carnal desire stirs him not.

E. J. W. Gibb.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL

(199)

God's vicegerent is as the soul of the universe,
His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name.
He knows the mysteries of part and whole,
He executes the Command of Allah in the world.

When he pitches his tent in the wide world,
He rolls up this ancient carpet.
His genius abounds with life and desires to manifest itself :
He will bring another world into existence

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Heart-strings give forth music at his touch,
He wakes and sleeps for God alone.

He gives a new explanation of Life
A new interpretation of this dream.
His hidden being is Life's mystery,
The unheard music of Life's harp.

Appear, O rider of Destiny !
Appear, O light of the dark realm of Change !
Illumine the scene of existence,

Give us back the wine of the cup of love :
Bring once more days of peace to the world,
Give a message of peace to them that seek battle.
Mankind are the cornfield and thou the harvest.
Thou art the goal of Life's caravan,
The leaves are scattered by Autumn's fury :
Oh, do thou pass over our gardens as the Spring !

R. A. Nicholson.

(200)

The luminous point whose name is the Self
Is the life-spark beneath our dust.
By Love it is made more lasting,
More living, more burning, more glowing.
From Love proceeds the radiance of its being
And the development of its unknown possibilities.
Its nature gathers fire from Love,
Love instructs it to illumine the world.
Love fears neither sword nor dagger,
Love is not born of water and air and earth.
Love makes peace and war in the world,
The fountain of Life is Love's flashing sword.
The hardest rocks are shivered by Love's glance :
Love of God at last becomes wholly God.

R. A. Nicholson.

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